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ABSTRACT

The papers presented in this volume were prepared for the ninth national conference of the Australian Association of Adult Education. The Conference was mainly a gathering of professional adult educators from Australian departments and institutions created for the purposes of adult education. The education of adults on a voluntary basis and without provision of qualifications is as yet a very minor social institution within Australian society. It is an institution which responds to a wide range of other more dominant social institutions, such as the political system. It is particularly in the political sense that all the papers which are included have relevance for teachers in whatever setting they work. (Author/CK)

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Australian Association of Adult Education

NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

VOLUME 1

The Political Education of Australians

1969

AAAE

BURTON HALL, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

PROCEEDINGS

of the

NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

of the

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF ADULT EDUCATION

Volume 1. The Political Education of Australians.

CANBERRA
1969

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PROGRAMME

FRIDAY, 22 AUGUST

2.00 - 5.00 p.m.	Registration at Burton Hall
5.15 p.m.	Reception
8.00 p.m.	"How We Come By Our Political Beliefs." Professor P.H. Partridge, The Australian National University. Chairman: Mr A.J.A. Nelson, Director of University Extension, University of New England.

SATURDAY, 23 AUGUST

9.00 - 10.30 a.m.	"Political Education in Schools." Dr D. Dufty, Education Department, Sydney University. Chairman: Mr I. Hanna, Department of Adult Education, University of Adelaide.
11.00 - 12.30 p.m.	Group Discussions.
2.00 - 4.00 p.m.	Syndicate Meetings.
8.00 p.m.	"The Role of the Intellectual in Political Education." Dr E. Kamenka, The Australian National University. Chairman: Dr C. Duke, Director, Department of Adult Education, The Australian National University.

SUNDAY, 24 AUGUST

9.00 - 10.30 a.m.	"Political Education through Radio and Television." Mr E.L. Sommerlad. Chairman: Dr D.W. Crowley, Director, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.
11.00 - 12.30 p.m.	Group Discussions.
2.00 - 4.00 p.m.	Syndicate Meetings.
7.30 p.m.	Annual General Meeting.

MONDAY, 25 AUGUST

9.00 - 10.30 a.m.	"Political Education through the Press." Mr. John Bennetts, Department of Political Science, S.G.S., The Australian National University. Chairman: Mr. Warwick Fox, Director of Classes, Council of Adult Education, Victoria.
11.00 - 12.30 p.m.	Group Discussions.
2.00 - 4.00 p.m.	Syndicate Meetings.
8.00 p.m.	"Political Education through Political Parties." Papers by Senator S.H. Cohen and Mr. E. St. John. Chairman: Sir John Crawford, Vice-Chancellor, The Australian National University.

TUESDAY, 26 AUGUST

9.00 - 10.30 a.m.	Syndicate Meetings.
10.30 - 12.30 p.m.	Syndicate Reports.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Dr Joan Allsop	Adult Education Department, Sydney University
Mr A. Ashbolt	Australian Broadcasting Commission
Mr C. Badger	Council of Adult Education, Victoria
Mr L.B. Carter	Board of Adult Education, Brisbane
Mr C. Cave	Adult Education Centre, Wangaratta
Mrs E. Christie	Workers' Educational Association of S.A.
Mr B.H. Crew	Dept. of Adult Education, Australian Nat. Uni.
Mr N. Crew	University Extension Dept., Uni. of New England
Dr D.W. Crowley	Adult Education Department, Sydney University
Mr T.E. Doe	Adult Education Board, Tasmania
Dr C. Duke	Dept. of Adult Education, Australian Nat. Uni.
Mr A.T. Duncan	Adult Education Department, Sydney University
Mr W.G.K. Duncan	North Adelaide
Mr B.H. Durston	University Extension Dept., Uni. of New England
Mr F.G. Foster	Adult Education Department, Sydney University
Mr W.A. Fox	Council of Adult Education, Melbourne
Mrs M. Friedman	Council of Adult Education, Melbourne
Mr A. Grey	Adult Education Department, Sydney University
Mrs E. Griffiths	Workers' Educational Association of N.S.W.
Mr S. Guth	Adult Education Department, Sydney University
Mr I. Hanna	Adult Education Department, Uni. of Adelaide
Mr O. Harries	Dept. of Political Science, Uni. of N.S.W.
Mr A.C.M. Howard	University Extension Dept., Uni. of New England
Mrs A.C.M. Howard	Tamworth, N.S.W.
Mr E.A. Iceton	University Extension Dept., Uni. of New England
Mr G. Lewis	Adult Education Department, Tasmania
Mrs R.A. Lewis	Country Women's Association, Canberra
Mr D.A. Lillecrapp	Education Department, South Australia
Mr D. Lowrey	Queanbeyan
Mr T.C. McAvoy	Workers' Educational Association of N.S.W.
Mrs T.C.McAvoy	Workers' Educational Association of N.S.W.
Mr D.J. Munro	Inst. of Modern Languages, Uni. of Queensland
Mrs D.A. Nicholls	Council of Adult Education, Victoria
Mr P. Pieraccini	Workers' Educational Association of N.S.W.
Mr S.J. Rooth	Immigration Department
Mr D.G. Sadler	Immigration Department
Mrs G.M. Singleton	Canberra
Mr R.G. Smith	Workers' Educational Association of N.S.W.
Mr J.W. Turner	Adult Education Department, Sydney University
Mr J. Tydde	Adult Education Board, Tasmania
Mr P.J. Tyler	Workers' Educational Association of N.S.W.
Mr J.W. Warburton	Department of Adult Education, Uni. of Adelaide
Mr A. Wesson	Council of Adult Education, Victoria
Miss R.M. Whiting	Adult Education Department, Sydney University
Mr F. Wigham	University Extension Dept., Uni. of New England
Mr J.L.J. Wilson	West Pymble,N.S.W.
Mrs J.L.J. Wilson	West Pymble,N.S.W.
Mrs H.R. Young	Workers' Educational Association, Illawarra Region

INTRODUCTION

The papers presented in this volume were prepared for the ninth national conference of the Australian Association of Adult Education, held at the Australian National University on 22 - 26 August 1969, and arranged for the Association by the Department of Adult Education (now Centre for Continuing Education) of that University.

The Conference was mainly though not exclusively a gathering of professional adult educators from Australian departments and institutions created for purposes of adult education, but the theme and potential interest are far wider. The subject was selected for its significance to other social and professional groups whose work abuts or complements that of the professional adult educator as well as for its central relevance for the profession itself. The decision to publish this volume and to make it available to a wider readership logically follows; most of the papers have a direct interest for students of political science, whether their inclination is theoretical or institutional; several have a special relevance for educators in schools, training colleges and departments of education.

The papers are reproduced largely as they were presented to the conference, except that the order of Dr Dufty's paper and the report of Dr Kamenka's address has been reversed, and Mr Harries' paper, which was made available but not read, is included immediately after Dr Dufty's. Both of these papers, with their concentration on purposes, methods and processes in formal education, are of obvious relevance to teachers; scarcely less relevant to the teacher concerned with the total environmental influence on his charges are the papers on the media by Mr Sommerlad and Mr Bennetts which follow. The final paper, by Mr St John, affords a challenge to political science teachers in universities which may readily be translated and applied in its essentials to the school-teacher. The interest of these papers to the student of political science, coupled with papers by the social and political philosophers Professor Partridge and Dr Kamenka on aspects of political education, is too obvious to need labouring.

It is not the purpose of this introduction to cannibalise the papers which follow; rather it aims to set them in a context of adult education as practised in Australia, and in the context of what transpired in the course of the conference itself, so as to draw out some of the general but not always explicit themes, and more of the significance and implications than might otherwise readily occur to the reader unfamiliar with this background.

The education of adults on a voluntary basis and without provision of qualifications is as yet a very minor social institution within Australian society; "as yet" because comparable overseas trends suggest that it is likely to become less minor, if still essentially marginal. It is, however, an institution which engages with, reflects and responds to, a wide range of other more dominant social institutions such as the political system, the structure of social and economic classes and interests, and the institutions of formal full-time education.

This combination of marginality with social responsiveness makes formal adult education a sensitive register of social history and social change. Its traditional social concern, its urge to be relevant and significant, makes political education a particularly critical concern for the tradition-conscious adult educator. As Mr Harries observes in his opening paragraph:

> "As far as one tradition of adult education is concerned, and it has strong claims to be regarded as the central tradition in Anglo-Saxon countries, the developing of an understanding of politics has been seen as one of the central purposes of adult education, either because adult education has been conceived of as an activity to redress the social balance by making the underprivileged more able to press their claims, or, more broadly, because its major function has been seen as the creation of conditions which would make democracy more real and more viable."

Although the earliest agencies devoted to the education of adults in Australia, the nineteenth century mechanics' institutes, actually banned discussion of political subjects, and university extension late in the century paid little or no attention to the burning issues of the day, issues of federation and Australian nationalism, controversial political subjects were in fact examined through programmes of lectures and discussions in the debating clubs of institutes. With the establishment in Australia of workers' educational associations, the study of politics was overtly given an important place in both purpose and practice. From that time it is probably true that adult educators have felt socially purposive and that this social purposiveness has been concerned above all with political processes and political problems, with "effective democracy" and with privilege. In the United Kingdom university adult education since the 'thirties has shown a marked tendency to provide education of an essentially individual and leisure-oriented kind; politics, economics and international affairs have yielded ground to art, music and local history. The attitude to this trend has been mixed; while it is often said that it is a healthy trend towards the rich and satisfying use of leisure - "what, after all, is democracy for?" - there is also an anxiety and a defensiveness about many of the comments, a suggestion of guilt and of betrayal of origins.

In Australia adult education is in sum a smaller enterprise, its history and provision less well documented and less accessible for such analysis. The information summarised in the appendix indicates the provision of classes in politics-related subjects, and the changes over three years, but not longer trends in relation to the total provision of classes in all subjects. However, a glance at Mr Harries' paper, and particularly at its discussion of the case put forward by one of Australia's most experienced and senior adult educators, will make clear that the same sense of concern and responsibility moves adult educators in Australia today. The traditional values and purposes of our forbears in mechanics' institutes and societies of arts, in extension departments and WEA branches, as well as our marginal and to a degree reflexive situation vis-a-vis other educational and social institutions today, encourage us to consider ourselves anxiously and feel socially and politically purposive. Political education is for many adult educators the raison d'être of adult education.

The relevance of this becomes obvious as one reads what was said by Professor Partridge and Dr Kamenka. Although there was no "keynote address" thus designated, Partridge in effect provided the key-note, and touched the raw nerve of the dedicated adult educator, by casting in doubt the very meaning and the nature of political education. Both he and Kamenka, with different themes and in different ways, are asking the questions whether we know what we mean by the words "political education" and whether we can do anything by formal and conscious purposes to further the cause. Dr Kamenka's conclusion that intellectuals and formal education alike have minimal significance in securing social change, and his theme that the intellectual - which would include the adult educator - has no particular claim to speak on behalf of reason or to rise above social situation and social interest, afford no flattery and little comfort to the professional educator of adults.

The concern that we are in business to secure political education without knowing what it is or how to secure it provoked denial and much discussion, yet recurred in different ways throughout the conference. Papers on the media by Mr Sommerlad and Mr Bennetts echoed some of the uncertainty. For all the traditional hostility of the political Left to the capitalist press and more recently to commercial television, there is, it appears, little evidence of the efficacy of the mass media in political education. Mr Sommerlad adverts to the theory of selective reception, and recalls the findings of American research to the effect that while television may play a reinforcing role its capacity for moulding opinion is much more debateable. Mr Bennetts refers to proprietors' urge to shape human destiny rather than merely to get rich, yet concludes with Henry Mayer that the alleged political influence of the press, based on untested assumptions, but is likely to be intangible, long-term and indirect.

Cumulatively these papers and the discussions which they provoked are most unsettling for the adult educator. They suggest that his traditional goal is ill-defined and may be so intangible as to be unattainable. A related theme of wider interest which this brings into focus is the nature and direction of social change. Between the familiar poles of the economic determinists who find the source of change and progress, there emerges a rather more sophisticated synthesis which attends to the processes of the communication and reception of ideas, to the social nexus within which communication and education in their various forms occur. This too is of central importance to adult educators whose clients come from social situations which dominate their life-patterns and assumptions; the student in an adult class is a student for only very few hours a week; the student in school or university is often student first and foremost. But the modern literature of education, and the efforts of modern political parties to seek expert advice on how to communicate to their potential supporters, each in different ways, point to wider interest in the social context of communication and education.

It is particularly in this sense that all the papers which follow have relevance for teachers in whatever setting they work. To the School-teacher Dr Dufty's paper on political education in schools is most immediately relevant; its concern with educational techniques attempts the essential yet uncommon synthesis of purpose with method without which so much educational writing is sterile. Although the paper is apparently more optimistic than some others in this volume, the reader would do well to ponder the implications of such an approach as Dr Dufty advocates in the schools and with the authorities and teachers which they know. Is the implicit radicalism of this approach compatible with the actual and possibly necessary conservatism of organised education? In similar vein the teacher might reflect on Mr St John's strictures on political science teaching in universities by those who find politics itself distasteful. Are school-teachers also often people who find the "real world" to a degree alien or distasteful, yet set out to provide their students with a realistic social and political education to fit them for that world?

One other unsettling theme recurred throughout the conference and may be traced in several of the papers. It is explicit in Mr Harries' paper: "As I see it our main interest is, rightly, in the relatively small minority which already has an interest in and some understanding of politics." This touches another raw nerve in the tradition-conscious adult educator with a sense of social injustice and an egalitarian urge to compensate. Adult education in Australia as in other western societies has always catered for an élite in one sense or another; this is especially true of those elements in adult education which are socio-political rather than recreational in intent. Adult educators have always fretted over their inability to appeal to the majority of the population postulated by their egalitarian ideals. Here at least the three distinct elements represented in these papers - politicians, media men and formal educators - have a common concern, even though their conclusions do not always harmonise. Each seeks to appeal to a mass audience. For the adult educator this is largely a matter of conscience; for the press, the television company or the political party it is rather a matter of survival. Each faces élitism as a threat to its purpose or identity, yet a fact of life to be accommodated. Although Harries seems to be alone among these writers in settling deliberately and openly for an élitist approach - selective intervention with critical groups in society - the problem may be identified by the perceptive reader in almost every contribution.

All in all these papers offer little comfort to those concerned with political education. Some are provocative, some appear rather negative. Although, as Dr Dufty concludes, to wait for absolute answers is inconsistent with contemporary epistemology, one inescapable conclusion, applied by Mr Bennetts to his own field, may be extended to the whole subject of the political education of Australians: "There are many questions but, regrettably, few answers."

Vernon Crew
Christopher Duke
Centre for Continuing Education,
The Australian National University.

Syndicate 1.

THE POLITICAL EDUCATION OF AUSTRALIANS

Convener: Mr O. Harries

Members:
Mr A. Ashbolt
Mr C. Cave
Mrs E. Christie
Mr N. Crew
Dr D.W. Crowley
Mr W.G.K. Duncan
Mr A.C.M. Howard
Mrs A.C.M. Howard
Mr D.A.J. Lillecrapp
Mr P. Pieraccini
Mr D.G. Sadler
Mr R.G. Smith
Mr J.W. Turner
Mr P.J. Tyler

SUMMARY OF TALK ON 'HOW DO WE COME BY OUR POLITICAL BELIEFS?'

by PROFESSOR P.H. PARTRIDGE

It is obviously impossible to give any single general answer to this question because different people come by their political beliefs in quite different ways; and even the one person, who may hold beliefs on many different political subjects, will probably not have acquired them all in the same manner. Some political beliefs are acquired by being taken over from traditional or conventional modes of political thinking from the society in which we grow up or from some part of that society - the family, for example. Some political beliefs are the products of psychological mechanisms or motives often not recognised by the person under their influence: in very many cases such phenomena as anti-seminitism or racial hostility which are expressed frequently in political attitudes are connected with deep-lying psychological mechanisms. Or again, many of the political beliefs that most of us hold are accepted because we think that they point the way to our economic advantage. Since very many different processes can be involved in the formation of belief, including political belief, a satisfactory answer to the question put to me as the subject of this lecture would be very complicated.

Again, what are political beliefs? Many different things might qualify to be called 'political beliefs'. Probably we would be inclined to include attitudes or sentiments of a highly inarticulate kind that nevertheless consistently affect a man's political behaviour: e.g., how he votes in elections. It is often impossible to distinguish 'belief' from sentiment or some kind of emotional fixation or predisposition. E.g., the emotional make-up of those who are more than normally shocked by any irreverant treatment of authority; or of those who get very emotional about the importance of preserving law and order; or those who are so obsessed by the dangers to 'national security' that they uncritically accept measures supposed to protect the state's security: in all such cases we recognise that there are strong emotional forces which are expressed in these political attitudes. What we may call the political 'beliefs' are a composite of emotion and verbal formulation: often they are virtually inarticulate; but we can't exclude these phenomena in talking about the formation of political belief because so much political behaviour is determined by emotional forces of this kind.

Many of the feelings and attitudes that influence our political behaviour and get expression in some of what we call our political 'beliefs' are prior to, or lie below the level of, political knowledge, inquiry or judgment. They are often generated in us by processes of which we haven't been aware. There are other types of political belief that are also produced in us by processes we are unconscious of: for example, many of our beliefs are merely habits of political response. Thus, in a very stable society it is probably true that the majority of citizens simply take for granted from their very earliest years the naturalness or rightness of the established institutions, just as they take for granted the fact that the sun rises at morn and sets in the evening. No doubt the stability and cohesiveness of any society depends to a very large degree on the unthinking habits of thought, feeling and behaviour characteristic of the majority of the community; and no doubt a very considerable part of the political beliefs of the members of a community consist of these habitual modes of thinking and feeling transmitted from generation to generation. In all societies in normal times there are powerful conservative and stabilising forces deriving from the inertia and thoughtlessness of political and social habit and tradition. This may be a necessary condition for the stability and continuity of complex societies. In answering the question of the lecture, we must insist that tradition, custom, habit - in thought, feeling and behaviour - is a fact of fundamental importance.

Of course, modes of believing and feeling which have been transmitted as customs, established social habits or traditions are often explained and justified by the development of reasons and theories: rationalisations. Philosophy was once defined as the finding of reasons for what we believe by instinct. Certainly in the case of political and social belief, much of it is the finding of reasons for what we accept as a matter of tradition and habit; and sometimes, as in the cases of sentiments and emotional 'sets' which I mentioned earlier, the finding of reasons for what we believe because those beliefs satisfy certain strong emotions we have. It is important to stress these 'non-rational' or non-intellectual foundations of political belief because they make up so large a part of the ordinary man's equipment of political belief; also because educators are possibly very apt to discount them and to exaggerate the role of knowledge, of processes of inquiry or discussion, in the formation of belief.

Obviously social and cultural influences play an enormous part in the formation of political belief. These influences are of so many sorts that it is impossible to attempt a list of them here. One type - the absorption of social traditions and habits - I've already mentioned. Cultural traditions combined with a particular political and social system can produce personality types which recur generation after generation. An example would be the tradition of authoritarianism and subordination in personal relations that was so strong, at least until recently, in German culture and society. Another example might be found in a portion of the white population of the southern states of the U.S. Again economic and social conditions reinforce emotional and attitudinal dispositions. Fear, distrust and resentment directed against ethnic minorities are often reinforced in conditions of poverty and harsh competition for the means of livelihood; and sometimes also such deep fears and hatreds of minorities express themselves also in strong opposition to liberal modes of thinking and living. Attitudes of violence, cruelty and destruction which may remain latent in individuals for long periods can be brought into open expression when political or economic circumstances change; the rise of Nazism provided thousands of instructive examples.

Thus, many political beliefs have buried and complex psychological foundations. Some of the people whose political attitudes are influenced by sentiments of this sort may be affected by experience, teaching or argument. But very often they are beyond the reach of that sort of influence.

We have been talking about a type or level of political 'belief' where belief is to a large extent constituted by emotional 'complexes' of one sort or another. Not all political beliefs, of course, are of that kind. But before considering two or three other types, there is another question we should think about: Are we entitled to assume that most of the members of a modern society can be said to have any, or many, political beliefs at all?

Those of us who theorise about politics and political systems perhaps tend to exaggerate the extent to which most people do,in fact, possess definite, considered or articulate beliefs or opinions about general political questions. That this exaggeration does often occur is strongly suggested by the numerous detailed empirical studies of popular political interests and attitudes and of the processes of election that have been made by political sociologists in recent years.

For example, it os often assumed that, within parliamentary democratic states, most people possess political beliefs of a very general sort: about the nature of democracy, about the values and virtues of democracy, about the functions of the central democratic institutions and so on. It is often assumed, in short, that within democracies most people are convinced democrats. It is sometimes assumed also that democracies only survive and work successfully because the majority of citizens know what democracy is or entails, and believe in it.

Close empirical studies of political attitudes and electoral behaviour don't altogether support these assumptions. They rather suggest that a large part of the population of democratic countries have little comprehension of the nature or meaning of the more general concepts and principles that make up a democratic ideology; many people are unable to say anything articulate when asked to explain what democracy is; many people show a conventional adherence to some established forms of words or slogans, but little or no comprehension of the meanings of those words and slogans. On the whole, what empirical knowledge we have of mass attitudes and beliefs suggests that 'belief' in political principles of the most general or 'fundamental' kind is a very weak and attenuated kind of belief. It may be roughly true to say that so far as most people are concerned (at least a large proportion) what is called 'belief' about the most general institutions and values of a democratic system is more of the nature of intellectual and social habit than anything that can strictly count as 'belief'.

But there are other levels of political belief. For examples, beliefs about the objectives or goals the society ought to pursue: economic development, greater equality, amelioration of poverty, social welfare and security, international power and prestige or whatever they may be. Obviously, general beliefs about what should be the ends of political policy are an important species of political belief. It is an interesting question how beliefs concerning such matters come to be accepted (or discarded) by members of a community. Obviously psychological predisposition is sometimes important, and so are social tradition and habit. Most people are habituated to the assumption that national independence and prestige are good things that governments ought to secure. They acquire the belief in the course of growing up in the society, in undergoing the process of 'socialisation'. Most children now grow up in societies in which it is accepted by the majority that constant economic growth and increasing material prosperity is a very good thing; and that all societies should provide for social security and welfare; no doubt such beliefs are largely picked up, so far as the majority are concerned, by 'contagion' from the society around them. But it is interesting to remember that it is only within comparatively recent times that these have become the standard beliefs of whole societies.

But, of course, in addition to beliefs about the objectives or goals of political policy that are more or less generally shared, in any society there are also divergent and conflicting beliefs. Some believe that governments should do nothing to impair opportunities for individual enterprise and responsibility (in the economic area), others that governments should strive to bring about greater equality. Different people can differ very sharply in their conceptions of the social 'values' that a society ought to accept and strive for. Within democracies political parties often divide about the objectives policy ought to pursue; different parties often give different weights or priorities to different kinds of objective.

A variety of social mechanisms influence the formation of opinions about objectives. One very important one, of course, is social class: many people follow the views and attitudes dominant amongst the people with whom they grew up, were at school with and so on. Occupational groups are very important: it is probably true that most men conform to the views that are predominant in the places where they work and amongst the people with whom they work. Many electoral studies and studies of popular political beliefs and attitudes have suggested that the pressures exerted by the occupational or professional group are amongst the most consistent and powerful. This is evident in the political impact of trade unions and other labour organisations on working glass political beliefs: it is probably no less important with respect to middle class occupations - or most of them. Again conceptions of one's individual, occupational, professional group or class interests are obviously important. This may or may not be independent of the factor mentioned earlier: sometimes a man's ideas about what his interests are, are conventional ideas derived from the social group or groups with whom he lives and works; sometimes they are reached as a result of genuine thought about policies and their implications.

In modern democratic societies traditional voting and political allegiance have become central political phenomena. In other words, a very large part of the community form the very general belief that one political party rather than others is on the whole more likely to serve the interests of the section of society to which they belong They then consistently vote for that party and may even accept more or less as an act of faith or allegiance most of the policies and doctrines the party proclaims from time to time. Subordination to the judgment of a particular politician or political leader also occurs; but in modern parliamentary democracies this is much less important than persistent party allegiance.

Of course many complications occur in relation to these simple, general and basic mechanisms that have been mentioned. One to which contemporary political sociologists attribute much importance is that of cross-pressuring. Few men identify themselves only with one social group; most men belong to many. Different groups to which they belong may impose political pressures which lead in different directions upon them. A member of a working class group may belong to the Catholic Church which may be opposed to certain of the policies of the trade union movement or of the Labour party which is supported by that movement: a situation in which some Australian Catholic trade union and working class people have found themselves in during recent years. Cross pressuring may produce different effects in individuals: it may cause some persons to 'keep out of' political activity (e.g. by not voting or not participating in organisations); with other persons it may be a stimulus to active political interest and thinking.

So far we have been talking especially in terms of two sorts of determinants of political belief: (a) Psychological determinants, and (b) Social pressures and influences of one kind or another. Perhaps we should also include (c) economic or other interests as a separate class of determinants. A fourth (d) should also be included, Experience.

Experience is an important determinant of the political beliefs of rank and file members of a community in many different ways and many different contexts. One common and important type is this: Many men will either have no opinion at all about, or be inclined to be suspicious about some particular line of social policy; but once it has been put into operation by a government, its working in practice makes it familiar and acceptable. Innumerable examples of this process can be mentioned. In most countries not so many years ago many kinds of social welfare or social insurance policies were either resisted or distrusted; when actual operation over a period of years shows that they do not produce the anticipated disasters and may even produce social good, they become incorporated in the conventional political wisdom. Similarly with many of the modern policies and techniques of governmental regulation of the economy.

This suggests a point that ought to have been emphasised earlier. With the majority of people and with regard to a great deal of their political belief, belief is formed as the result of familiarity with institutions, arrangements, procedures and policies that have already come into operation. In normal circumstances, the rank and file do not possess political and social opinions which precede events and guide them. 'Elites', small groups with political initiative, with innovating capacity, shape policy and initiate it: the majority react to it in normal circumstances, either by accepting or acquiescing in it, or else, rather more rarely, rejecting it. It is only to a very limited extent that what is called 'public opinion' seems to direct the course of policy-making.

Can we also say - in addition to the effect of experience of policies already in operation - that sometimes direct experience of a change in the course of economic or social events produces widely shared and novel political opinions upon which political leaders are forced to act?

Experience of changed circumstances, of quite different ways of living, has throughout history clearly been one of the most fundamental determinants of political belief. This is the core of the Marxist notion that "existence determines consciousness, not consciousness existence". The growth of industrialism, the massing of industrial workers in factories and industrial cities, obviously affected the conceptions that workers came to entertain about their legitimate political and economic rights and roles. What factors in the course of modern history produced new generally accepted beliefs about the right of women to greater legal equality, equal political rights? What were the chief influences in the growth of the now almost universally accepted belief that all children should have equal educational opportunities, and that the provision of free public education ought to be one of the primary tasks and duties of the state? Without doubt these beliefs were slowly fashioned, partly by changing forms of economic and social organisation, partly by the moral and social teaching of influential individuals and organisations, partly by the initiative of political parties or political elites.

One might conclude by considering the role of formal education in the formation of political beliefs. Like all the other matters touched on here, this is an enormously complex subject. There are a few propositions (or hypotheses) one might advance by way of breaking into the subject:

(a) Formal education, as a process of 'socialisation', plays an important role in instilling basic, general, conventional beliefs about the society's political institutions, about political values, and about ends or objectives of social and political life. Usually these are the conventional views; in most countries (if in any) formal education tends to avoid teaching much about politically controversial questions.

(b) In the case of many of the political 'elites' formal education is often of great importance. This is especially so in modern societies in which so many of the problems of political policy, of social organisation, of public and social administration, involve questions of a highly technical sort. Education in such areas as economics, public administration, health, conservation, etc. etc. may have a great influence upon more general political beliefs of those who receive it.

(c) It is not at all clear to what extent the spread of education (in secondary schools and universities, in various forms of continuing education, through the mass media and the wider reading of books and magazines) contributes to moulding the political opinions of those exposed to these influences. Presumably there is a minority of whom it could be said that they derive many of their political beliefs as a result of processes that may be called educational - reading, study, discussion, etc. Even in the case of this literate, reading, educated minority the influences that come from this source have to contend with the influence of psychological determinants, social pressures, economic and other interests.

(d) It is probably true that those influenced by these educational processes are a minority; perhaps a comparatively small one. It may be that the majority of a modern society of whatever social class either have no beliefs at all that can be dignified by the title of political beliefs, or very few; and further, it is probably true that such forces as social tradition and habit, the pressure of individual or group interests, class and social group identifications, traditional party allegiances, are still, for the great majority of citizens, much the most potent determinants of political belief. But these are very difficult problems of sociological research; although much research of this kind now goes on, it is still true that we have no very clear and certain knowledge of the derivation of political beliefs of different kinds, and amongst different types of individual and social group, in our extremely complex modern societies.

THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECTUAL IN POLITICAL EDUCATION

NOTE: Certain difficulties, not anticipated at the time of the conference, have prevented us from printing Dr Kamenka's paper in full. What follows is a report of his address. This is as accurate as we can make it but, naturally, there are deficiencies and possibilities of mistakes and misinterpretations. In spite of this we considered that the importance of the topic for adult educators warranted publication even in this form. Ed.

Dr Kamenka began by explaining that he found some difficulty with the topic, especially with the terms "intellectual" and "political education".

"Intellectual" is a recent word in English, related to "academic" and probably derived from the Russian intelligentsia of the nineteenth century. In Russia the intelligentsia appeared first in the army and played a part in the Westernization and modernization of that country. "Intellectual" implies that education or belief in the significance of education is a class or political matter. This is true in some societies but not in others.

In under-developed countries intellectuals are a modernizing force without practical outlets. They become a revolutionary class from the very nature of society. Usually linked with the middle class, they are the equivalent of a class with other than educational characteristics - bourgeoisie, merchants etc. Intellectuals rarely form a class and only do so under special conditions. To speak of intellectuals or an intelligentsia as a cohesive group is to assume these conditions. Let us recognise that intellectuals are not always or usually a class and that they do not exist as a class in Australia.

Intellectuals as a profession are to be distinguished from intellectuals as a class - not so much proclaiming the claims of reason and knowledge (or of people with reason and knowledge) as applying reason and knowledge to social affairs. They fulfil the role of the expert on the one hand and promote the specifically intellectual virtues and the intellectual vices on the other.

Even here intellectuals as a profession are not homogeneous. An intellectual is conditioned by his occupation and by his particular discipline. A Namierite historian and an Hegelian historian have very different views of the world and of politics. Scientists and economists, historians and philosophers differ from each other and among each other. An intellectual discipline is like a job. It moulds your outlook, draws your attention to different features of society and leads to differences in outlook. Intellectuals do not speak on behalf of reason even as a profession, let alone as a class.

(Dr Kamenka referred to the problem of identifying a group as the carrier of rationality. Note Mannheim, Marcuse, Marx's emphasis on the proletariat, Weber's on the bureaucracy. Only in Weber does rationality have a specific meaning.

He then quoted three pieces on intellectuals and just causes. These are given as an appendix to this report.)

In the western world, intellectuals (students) now take the place of anarchists and workers. Why? As industrialization develops the workers lose their revolutionary fervour. Their place is taken by suffering minorities which stand at the edge of industrial society - negroes, aborigines, peasants. Their frustrated rage is mistaken for a revolutionary spirit. There is a fusion of the pre-industrial Luddite with the post-industrial Luddite in peasant China, Cuba etc. and on university campuses. Both have been freed from the pressures of work in industrial society.

Are the characteristics of a profession (its virtues etc.) to be found in political education? It is hard to see it. There are competing interests even among intellectuals. Feuerbach wrote that knowledge was opposed to authoritarianism. But knowledge is also opposed to the labelling tendency of democracy.

Note the conflict of educational values with democracy (all are not free). Also note that education is now based on the student not the subject, on self-confidence not knowledge. There is a student-centred mood, e.g. in project teaching and a tendency to distort subjects to fit student needs, e.g. black sympathetic teachers only to teach black history in United States universities. Intellectual values are to be used for political ends.

The concept of "political education" is a confused one. Does one learn politics (i.e. political ideals) as one learns French or arithmetic? Politics is vague and obscure, but the role of the intellectual is to be clear, precise and to lay bare issues. We can, of course, study the science of politics (pressure groups, political behaviour, political parties, etc.). We can shade off into sociology (types of society, effects of social change, etc.). Marxists used to believe that they were the world's best politicians because they had the best science of politics. But this is value-free; it does not prescribe our political goals. Note Hilferding's distinction between Marxism and socialism. The "science of politics" can be used in the service of any and all political goals. The Americans can use it as well as the Russians, and so can the Chinese. The science of politics may have one important political implication. It makes implausible the doctrine of total revolution (just as history does). It rejects the conception of a great leap out of society or out of history. But this is given by experience generally. We note it in Marx, in Engels and in Lenin as they grow older.

Generally there is a law of diminishing returns in the study of political science for the politicians. Many do study it - but the great historian Miliukov and the lawyer Kerensky were among Russia's worst Prime Ministers. There is flair in politics, just as in life; psychoanalysts do not necessarily make the best or the most helpful parents. Flair is the ability to respond to a complex situation in the speed that exceeds the time needed to spell it out or to describe it. Note the "Hamlet interpretation" of Martov's failure to be effective against Lenin.

Intellectuals are not good for politics. They sharpen rather than smooth over differences, bringing out differences. Can this be summed up by saying that politics depends on glossing over disagreements, pretending that there is a common interest? Certainly a lack of intellectual sharpness or of intellectual honesty is an asset in politics. Lenin's genius as a politician lay precisely in his intellectual dishonesty. Even the statesman must gloss over issues. Politics must be machiavellian; must be dishonest.

What role does education play in politics? The optimism of the 'forties is now gone. There is little evidence that education or the intellectual brings expertise to politics. In Yugoslavia and peasant societies there is a belief that attitudes change with education, but it is false to link education with tolerance. The comfortable middle classes can afford to be liberal. Education is less politically relevant than we think. Education and intellectuals are less politically relevant than we think of minimal significance in securing social change.

In conclusion, the social role of intellectuals varies with their social situation and reflects it. The political significance of political education is at a low level. Intelligent sustained and informed opinion is very dependent on a maintained state of society. This is difficult in Australia because of the size of the country. It also depends on a status society which makes it so easy in Britain and difficult in Australia. Intellectuals and education on the whole are not the source of change.

Appendix

INTELLECTUALS AND JUST CAUSES : A SYMPOSIUM

John Osborne:

The last time I involved myself in any political demonstration was in 1961, when, with a great many other writers or hang-around writers, I "sat down" in Trafalgar Square. I fully expected to go to gaol but mercifully didn't, although I was looking forward at the time to a legitimate reason for not being able to write. In fact, I was lovingly carried off into a van by eight - I think - kindly constables who called me "sir". (All those I saw manhandled asked for what they got. And they wanted it.) Apart from being reviled and libelled by the Sunday Express, I was fined forty shillings and went home for a good soak in the bath with a severe headache. I don't regret having done this. At the time it had a kind of national poetic logic that certain of us should make this particular gesture. My sense of timing rarely lets me down and I know I was right at the time. However, I resolved then that I should never engage in this kind of concerted affair again unless some unforeseeable situation should arise. It revealed itself to my simple spirit that there is a certain kind of militant animal which seeks out and exploits political crises for reasons of personal aggrandisement and creative frustration. There is an odour of psychopathic self-righteousness about many of the hardy annual protesters which I find ludicrous and distasteful. I have long ago refused to sign those glib and predictable letters to the Times, including the one during the recent Israeli crisis when so many of these cause-happy activists leapt to the telephone and their pens.

The same principle applies to the Viet Nam War, the very name of which has become a synonym for left-wing sanctimony. I have not been able to come to a clear resolution over this or many other political dilemmas. I do know that I see little to choose between police terrorism and shoddy American power politics. Except that I find the latter minimally less repugnant. We really do live in a very wicked world. I believe that writers should express their position about this as well as they can and in the country in which they have elected to live. Writers are often more thoughtful than the rest of the community and occasionally more literate. However, they should speak modestly as gifted or admired individuals and not as part of a privileged pressure group with access to revealed truths. The presumption and sentimentality of many of my fellow craftsmen is frequently appalling. May God gag all actresses forever. Unless they are divine and the ones who are just shut up.

Max Beloff:

Judgment on a complex international situation demands some willingness not only to observe consistent criteria, but also to have some idea of the facts of the situation. My own views are after all not those of any intellectual but of someone professionally concerned with the study of politics. I am doubtful whether commitment even of this limited kind is meaningful in the case of creative or performing artists or other intellectuals whose sphere gives them no special knowledge of or insight into political problems. Of course this does not mean they should not have views and express them - but they have no right to expect any particular weight to be given to them. If a Jewish (or Gentile) actor, painter, or poet expresses sympathy with Israel, this is no less and no more meaningful than if it were a Jewish (or Gentile) tailor, shop-keeper or bus-driver.

That is why I am irritated by collective expressions of opinion - manifestos, meetings, etc. - even when they are on "my side", as it were. I do not think that a case gets added weight because a lot of people who have no particular insight into the issue sign their name to a statement. The explanation why they nevertheless do behave in this way is not hard to discern. Many intellectuals are frustrated men of action - if you cannot go and fight for Israel, you can at least sign for Israel. (This is not altogether a bad thing; money-raising which is of great practical value would be much harder if signing cheques were not a psychological substitute for action.) Also, of course, people think that public opinion at large and so the political process can be affected by such demonstrations. I do not find this very plausible - least of all in Britain where intellectuals are not taken too seriously - but people who feel strongly in a cause can hardly be blamed for trying. Like the "jongleur de Notre Dame" one can only give what one has. In the case of many intellectuals a name is all they have.

The final observation is that the interest of intellectuals in causes appears to be highly dependent upon great and dramatic events. Most of the problems of the Middle East - including its humanitarian problems - have existed for some twenty years, yet it takes war to make people aware of them. It is certain that the path towards peace will be long and arduous, and intellectuals should have something to contribute to peace-making which depends so much upon mental attitudes as well as material decisions. But one feels that most of the intellectuals will have shifted their interest to some new scene of conflict and carnage such as the world seems only too ready to supply.

Tibor Szamuely:

The Western intellectuals' approach to the political developments of the last few years has been distinguished, it seems to me, by two essential qualities. One is the apparent alignment of the most vocal section of the intellectual community with what is broadly termed "the Left". There exists today a rigid set of orthodox progressive ideas, a kind of portable intellectual medicine-chest lined with dozens of neatly labelled ideological nostrums for every occasion: Abortion, Aden, Advertising, Afro-Asia, Big Business, Birth Control, Catholic Church, Censorship, Colonialism, etc., etc. ... through the whole litany, down to UN, Unilateralism, Viet Nam, War-toys, Wilson, Yemen, Zambia and Zionism. One always knows beforehand, with infinite boredom, just what the progressive intellectual's position is going to be on any conceivable issue. This is one of the reasons why the Middle East crisis, like the Hungarian Revolution before it, was so important: it overturned the medicine chest, smashing the pre-packed panaceas, wreaking havoc among the certitudes.

The other striking - and paradoxical - aspect of the "progressive" intellectuals' involvement in politics is the fundamentally *non-intellectual* nature of their commitment. However sincere and deep-felt, it is almost invariably an *emotional* attitude, owing very little, if anything, to the processes of reasoning and study that one usually associates with the word "intellectual". (Perhaps this is why actors and actresses have suddenly become so prominent in various "intellectual" political manifestations.) It is, for instance, practically impossible to carry on a rational argument about Viet Nam, to hear a case against US policy made in coherent, analytical, factual terms. What one gets is a confused melange of overwrought emotive phrases: "people are being killed there," "the Americans have no right to be in Asia," "white men are killing coloured people," and so on.

Or take another example: the words "fascist" and "fascism" have now lost any meaning they originally possessed, and have become no more than emotive expressions, applied indiscriminately to any politician, policy, or regime of which the Left happens to disapprove. Today the "progressive" intellectual appears to have absolved himself from having to argue his case, from collecting the facts, mustering the evidence, demolishing his opponent point by point - things at which genuine radical intellectuals like Marx used to excel. All this has been done away with now: it is quite sufficient to cry "Fascist!" - and a great emotional groundswell of instant images and lurid associations will effectively drown out any timid voices asking for proof of the accusation. Curiously enough, the very same scholar who feels no compunction about hurling the charge of "fascism" at any political opponent in sight would never dream of using similar methods in his professional teaching or research work. That is quite different: there he scrupulously adheres to the highest standards of evidence and analysis. Intellectual standards are renounced in favour of emotions only when it comes to involvement in the political issues of the day.

It was not always thus. Thirty years ago the progressive intellectual would swear by Marxism - which, whatever one can say about it, was certainly a rational system of thought. But since then life has consisted of one disappointment after another: the patent failure of the collectivist economy, as against the achievements of capitalism in raising living standards; the stubborn refusal of Communist totalitarianism to become democratic; the appalling and increasingly hopeless mess in Afro-Asia. Every traditional pillar of the progressive *Weltanschauung* has crumbled to dust. A choice had to be made: either one looked the facts in the face and made an agonising re-appraisal, or one firmly shut one's eyes to reality. It is, I believe, this desperate escape from an unpalatable reality into a never-never world of imaginary heroes (Lumumba, Nyerere, Castro, *et al.*) and mythical villains (LBJ and a host of lesser demons), of non-existent causes and artificial emotions, that characterises the "progressive" approach to politics. Facts and realities - whether of Soviet labour camps, East European political trials, African massacres, or Indian misrule - are not allowed to intrude into this cosy world of make-believe. Secure under the protection of US fire-power - and knowing this, and hating himself for knowing it - the intellectual cries out for more stories of American atrocities. No horrendous anti-Western tales are too incredible to be disbelieved, no facts about Communism or the Third World sufficiently well-documented to be accepted. The liberal intelligentsia has replaced reason by faith, rational judgments by visceral reactions.

But what, one may ask, is there wrong with being guided by emotion in politics? A great deal. For one thing, these emotions are hardly the noble humanitarian ideals they are made out to be. Compassion for human suffering? Then how can they cast a blind eye on the continuing slaughter of tens of thousands in the Yemen, Indonesia, Nigeria, the Congo, Sudan, and a great many other places. Devotion to democracy and human rights? Then how can they be seeking out every possible extenuating circumstance in favour of unreconstructed Communist totalitarianism and "progressive" dictatorships in the Third World. Hatred of war and violence? Then how explain the martial postures over the Middle East, to say nothing of the open admiration for the Viet Cong and other "freedom fighters"?

Orwell exposed this stance years ago:

> There is a minority of intellectual pacifists whose real though unadmitted motive appears to be hatred of Western democracy and admiration for totalitarianism... If one looks closely at the writings of the younger intellectual pacifists, one finds that they do not by any means express impartial disapproval but are directed almost entirely against Britain and the United States. Moreover they do not as a rule condemn violence as such, but only violence used in defence of the Western countries.

All this is as true today as it was then.

The real mainspring of intellectual emotionalism seems to be a strange compound of irrational guilt, self-hatred, anti-Americanism, wishful thinking, power-worship, and arrogance. A considerable element of hypocrisy comes into it as well. "We all, of course, abhor dictatorship and violence," they proclaim, "but in those remote, underdeveloped places there seems to be no other solution - and besides, the poor fellows wouldn't really know the difference anyway..." It is very easy for the Anglo-Saxon intellectual to scoff at democracy and to gloss over such things as censorship, secret police, or concentration camps - fortunately, he knows of them only by hearsay. One could even formulate the following proposition as a general law of politics: the extent of progressive feeling among the intellectuals of any given country is in direct proportion to the distance between that country and the nearest totalitarian dictatorship.

I am afraid that our emotional intelligentsia is perpetrating an imposture upon society. Intellectuals demand special consideration for their views _qua_ intellectuals - because theirs are trained minds, capable of intense mental concentration, possessing a fund of specialist knowledge, used to analysing the facts and establishing the truth in a detached spirit of scientific inquiry. This is why, they argue, governments should pay the greatest attention to their opinions. And it us under these false pretences that attempts are made to palm off on an unsuspecting public a jumble of tortured emotional attitudes dressed up as a reasoned, cogent, and substantiated intellectual case.

The Anglo-Saxon Nations have a long tradition of keeping intellectuals away from power and of not paying any attention to their political views. On present form there seems to be every justification for upholding it in the future.

Extracts from:
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London, September 1967.

POLITICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

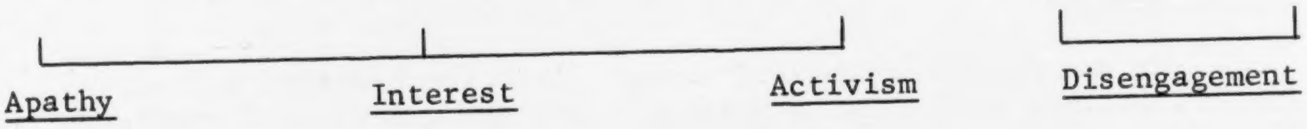
by DAVID G. DUFTY

"Me? Interested in politics? You've gotta be kidding!"

"Sure I'm keen to learn about politics but please tell it like it is: not how it's supposed to be."

"The school ought to be where the action is - but it isn't - so we are bringing some action into the schools."

"It's their system, baby. And it's a bitch."



There is a wide range of possible reactions by youth to politics including one which is right off the continuum. Political education in schools consequently faces a multitude of dilemmas.

- Is current political education adequate? Do we need to have special courses or can we slip politics into other subjects?

- Do children get enough political education from other media without spelling it out in schools?

- Can you really teach about politics at all? Should it be learnt in the school of life? Will our attempts to teach politics kill rather than create interest?

- Are present teachers really fitted to teach politics or would some of their more politically active students do a better job?

- Can our teaching bridge the credibility gap between social ideals and social practice? Will the discrepancies in our teaching contribute to student alienation?

- If we teach politics "like it is", will we unmask our society and weaken commitment to its morals and values? Will our society indeed permit us to develop radically different social science courses?

- Can teachers, parents, and pupils be persuaded to accept the classroom, rather than the staffroom, club or bottom playground, as the place to discuss controversial issues, value problems and social action?

- Can we avoid the traditional biases of current syllabuses and textbooks? Is propaganda and indoctrination completely out of place in the "enquiry-oriented" classroom?

- Rather than a fragmented description of current political institutions, can we teach an understanding of political trends and processes which will be of use to pupils when contemporary society has changed its form?

Since no major study of political education in schools has ever been undertaken in Australia[1], this paper must inevitably be an exploratory one which raises questions, collates sources of data and suggests lines of advancement.

What is Taught?

My own limited survey of school classrooms, school syllabuses, teachers college handbooks, educational writing and student knowledge and attitudes suggests that there is a very limited amount of political education being attempted in Australia and that what there is tends to be static, formal and lacking in a clear rationale. Little systematic effort appears to have been made to relate school courses to:

- current conceptions of the nature of politics and political science;
- the development of political attitudes and concepts in children;
- current trends in social life;
- new teaching techniques.

Primary syllabuses appear to assume (without any reference to research studies) that little children are rather too young to have much interest or understanding of politics. The N.S.W. primary school social studies courses devotes considerable space to "inculcating attitudes" and emphasises "loyalty to the Throne and to the Queen" but the major political section of the course reads as follows:

> Our National Government. The local member and the electoral division. A simple treatment of the Commonwealth Government. A brief history of Federation; Parkes, Barton and Deakin. Federal leaders of note: W.M. Hughes and John Curtin.

Earlier years have mentioned local and state government on the dubious assumption that these are more closely related to the expanding environment of the young child.

From there on it is possible in N.S.W. to be a political illiterate.

The secondary social studies curriculum for first form is predominantly history and geography. If you then take geography as your core course for the School Certificate, and also for the Higher School Certificate, you will be exposed to virtually no teaching about politics during your secondary schooling. I have some empirical evidence of political illiteracy in N.S.W. which I will present to the school in August.

The 1966 Experimental Social studies Syllabuses in Western Australia have given some attention to government but a second form discussion of "Stages in Making a Law" gives no attention to the political forces and pressures which precede the work of cabinet and parliament. The teachers' handbook of this course suggests the following time allocations for the third form units on "The Development of Parliamentary Democracy" and "Democratic and Federal Government in Australia":

The Origins of Democracy	2 periods
The Growth of Parliament in Britain	3 periods
Democratic Government in Australia	1 period
Federal Government in Australia	1 period
Parliament in Australia	1 period
Democracy in other countries	1 period

Both the time distribution and the taxonomy are intriguing.

New social studies syllabuses are appearing in Tasmania and South Australia but current emphasis appears to be on sociological generalizations about such topics as "Order and Authority in the Community" and teachers are likely to be handicapped by lack of realistic case studies to illustrate broad principles. Sociologists are playing an important role in developing these new syllabuses but political scientists have been less active in their interest.

Political ideas in social studies textbooks would make an interesting thesis topic. The 1968 first form high school social studies textbook in front of me baldly assures the student that "The Liberal Party has for its members businessmen and 'white collar' employees" and that "the chief interest of the D.L.P. is the control of Communism". It then bluntly states the following "fact" for pupils to learn: "Elections in Australia are democratic". The treatment is again oversimplified; it lacks a discussion of political ideas and concepts; it eschews controversy and the discussion of value questions. A workbook for Queensland 10th graders on "Citizenship Education" published in 1969 consists mainly of brief answer and objective questions such as: "The people of Queensland are represented in the Senate by .... Senators". The large space provided admittedly offers plenty of scope for imagination.

School assemblies and classroom rituals are ostensibly aimed at civic education but are probably more concerned with conformity to behaviour patterns rather than with understanding the ways in which individuals and groups can take positive action to influence decision making in society. One school I visited this year proudly proclaimed among its objectives: "social development of the individual: particularly the ability to conform".

Training of teachers in political science also appears to be very limited in amount and scope. A survey of Teachers Colleges handbooks revealed courses in Social Studies Methods plus History and Geography courses but seldom courses in Political Science. Where reference is made to government and politics, emphasis appears to be primarily on Parliamentary Procedures, Australian Electoral System, Political Parties in Australia - formal Government courses - and there seems to be little reference to the scope and nature of Politics and Political Science.

There is an exception to the above trends and that is the Victorian Leaving and Matriculation courses in Social Studies. These courses were designed with the assistance of a political scientist. They emphasise political forces rather than machinery and procedures, stress the importance of asking the question "what is the nature of politics", require depth rather than superficial coverage, and by their bibliographies, examination questions and examiner's comments appear to be promoting a realistic and up-to-date study of Australian political life.

Factors such as:

- The possibility of the voting age being lowered.
- The development of political activism by high school students.
- The increasing complexity and fluidity of contemporary social life with its changing values, technology and institutional life.
- The sheer lack of time (relative to other fields) spent in schools on the study of politics and political science (in view of the fact that politics is a major aspect of the total society and that political science is now a major segment of the total study of society).

All suggest that a major review should be undertaken of what is being taught in schools about politics and political science.

What Can be Taught?

"Political Socialization" is an in-subject at the moment. The Australian journal Politics devoted a special issue largely to the subject[2], as did the Harvard Educational Review[3], and an abundance of other articles have recently appeared[4].

Political socialization refers to the way in which society transmits political orientations - knowledge, attitudes and values - from generation to generation. The vital issues at this point are: "what role does and can the school play in this process of socialization" and "at what age, or stage of development, are children able to comprehend to the full the complexities of political ideas and processes?"

Any scientific evidence on the above matters will clearly influence curriculum building. Unfortunately evidence is conflicting and mainly comes from the United States where children may be rather different from our own. The Australian studies have been rather limited, "shoestring" efforts, compared with the American, and some are now out of date.

H.M. Hyman's 1959 study in U.S.A.[5] placed major emphasis on the family as a powerful and persistent influence on political attitudes but Hess & Torney's 1967 study of 17,000 elementary school children concluded that "the school apparently plays the largest part in teaching attitudes, conceptions, and beliefs about the operation of the political system. While it may be argued that the family contributes much to the socialization that goes into basic loyalty to the country, the school gives content, information and concepts which expand and elaborate these feelings of attachment"[6]. One suspects that Hess & Torney's conclusions are framed in a more sweeping way than their research justifies.[7] One also wonders to what extent the American school contributes to current political alienation in the United States and produces detachment rather than attachment.

There is certainly considerable evidence, however, that many United States children have established attitudes, opinions and behaviour by the end of elementary school which correspond closely to those of adults.[8] They have developed abstract and realistic viewpoints rather than personalized and highly benevolent images of government; they have already worn campaign buttons and passed out campaign literature. Australian primary school children may be less politically sophisticated but some research studies suggest that by ten years they have developed "new intellectual tools to comprehend leadership, conflict, and differences among public figures."[9]

Another United States study has shown that cognitive capacities expand during high school and children develop clearer understandings for example, of differences between political parties.[10] Such research needs replication in Australia. My own exploratory investigation suggests that even at Teachers College level N.S.W. students have considerable difficulty explaining party differences.

> "Liberals are radical, labour more conservative".
>
> "The A.L.P. is dominated by Catholics".
>
> "The Liberal Party is more democratic than the Labour Party, which tends towards Communistic ideals".
>
> "The Liberal Party has a policy of helping as many people as possible while the A.L.P. appeals to certain rationalistic (sic) sections".

Many other stereotyped or blank responses were given by a group of N.S.W. Teachers College students in reply to the question: "How would you explain the difference between Labour and Liberal parties to a visitor to Australia?"

More courses in politics, however, may not be the solution to hastening political understanding. A recent sophisticated study at the University of Michigan of those who took high school courses in government as compared with those who took no courses offered "strikingly little support for the impact of the curriculum".[11] The researchers felt that high school political education may have been redundant to white American youth since they had already been exposed to many sources of information. This conclusion was supported by evidence of a greater change in negro students who were less "saturated" by political knowledge. Australian students presumably absorb some politics through the mass media but schools may well leave them "poli-unsaturated".

Studies in American colleges have indicated that the student culture can strongly influence such matters as party affiliation, conservatism, and political participation[12] although specific changes in curricula to increase participation in political life have not necessarily been effective.[13] Our young high school activists seem quite potent elements in political socialization. On the other hand Torney and Hess concluded that "participation in peer group organizations within the school or outside it does not have a significant effect upon the political socialization process."[14]

Despite the above contradictions and uncertainties Patrick[15] is able to list a number of implications of studies in political socialization for secondary school social studies, and Australian social science educators would be wise to consider both overseas and Australian research studies. Political socialization is a stimulating field and by no means says to the educator - "give up trying: your task is a vain one." It may be that if school courses are radically modified the school will be able to play a qualitatively different role in political socialization.

What ought to be Taught?

Curriculum building is ultimately a matter of philosophy rather than science. Let me present some assumptions and a course based on these assumptions for readers to challenge and criticise.

Assumptions

My assumptions are that we should present the rising generation with:

1. A realistic view of political life. As with sex-education we lose face with our children when we are secretive and dishonest. Persisting with the teaching of a Santa Claus view of the state to adolescents is probably sowing the seeds of political cynicism.

2. A contemporaneous view of political life, which admits that society is changing; that Britain no longer rules the waves; that Australia is America's mate but lives next door to, if not in, Asia.

3. A discipline-based view of political life, which draws on the professional knowledge of the political scientist, both for guidance in planning courses and methods and in the development of reference materials.

4. A systematic view of political life,based on a model or paradigm, in order to help children discern relationships between various elements in the system rather than see it as a jumble of bits and pieces. This may lead to oversimplification and no model will be perfect but the use and limitations of scientific models can be taught to children as part of their training in political science.

5. A human and humanistic view of political life which studies motives, ambitions, passions, morality and values. The use of models should not lead us away from a historical view of politics which admits that individuals can be proud, loving, wise, unlucky and completely mistaken.

6. A reflective view of political life, so that students can ponder, at least in the secondary school, the nature of democracy in a changing world. Value questions cannot be avoided, indeed should be an integral part of a school course not on "Political Science" but rather on "Politics" or "Political Life". Political science is regarded by the writer as the major discipline contributing to such a course but the school course is both science and humanity.

7. An optimistic and positive view of political life, which explores how individuals and groups have achieved their political goals. A "problems" approach may thus be less desirable than a "systems of society" approach. The former may stress social pathology: the latter give more attention to social health.

A Suggested Course for Secondary Schools

Ideally one should at this point suggest a framework for social studies education from kindergarten to the end of secondary school and show how political knowledge could be incorporated into this framework at various levels. Readers may care to do this for their own states. As a more compact alternative, I would like to sketch out a course for use in the final two years of the senior secondary school. The course suggests examples - it does not cover the many possible topics implied by the above assumptions; it assumes some background in history or social studies from the primary and junior secondary schools; it attempts to incorporate a number of ideas drawn from various contemporary sources.[16] Obviously, such a course could only be taught if special case study material were to be developed specifically for the course. For example, a book like Creighton Burns Parties and People might be specially re-written for student readers so that they could obtain a realistic and lively account of an Australian election.

Readers are invited to criticize, amend or completely reject this course.

A SECONDARY COURSE IN POLITICAL LIFE

Examples of Aims	Examples of Content	Examples of Approaches	Examples of Aids, References, etc. for Teachers and Students
Knowledge of terminology of scientific methods and of theories.	1. What is politics? Varied approaches possible. A useful definition for this course.	Case studies of power structure or decision making in home, playground, school, club, union, business firm, government department as well as in the arena of state.	H.V. Wiseman, Politics in Everyday Life. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966.
	2. What is political science? Varied approaches possible. A useful model for this course.	Building up of a model of political life. Case studies in how political scientists work.	See models in D.Collier The Political System. Lafayette, Social Science Education Consortium 1966 and F.J. Sorauf Political Science. Charles E. Merrill, 1966. p.6.
Awareness of the many political messages that impinge upon the individual and which must be unscrambled in order to make sense of what they are receiving.	3. How do people develop political ideas? The family The school The mass media Social class The Australian culture	Discussion of concepts such as "social class", "role", "culture", "the establishment","the power elite", "trend setters", "political communications", and "political socializers".	H. Wolfsohn "Idealogy Makers" in H. Mayer Australian Politics. Various references on political socialization, e.g. Hess & Torney. The Development of Political Attitudes in Children.

Examples of Aims	Examples of Content	Examples of Approaches	Examples of Aids, References, etc. for Teachers and Students
		Simple tests questionnaires, interviews and attitude tests given to members of school community.	See attitude test and exercise in H.Mehlinger The Study of American Political Behaviour. Political Behaviour Laboratory University of Minnesota.
Awareness of one's own values. Discriminating, selecting, evaluating, data to assist in solving value problems. Skill in the techniques of social science.	4. How can one make up one's mind about a political issue? Analyzing one's values. Drawing on evidence from the scientists. Critically evaluating messages from the mass media. Arguing in a consistent way.	Analysis of case studies, e.g. "Control of overseas investment in Australia", using planned techniques for analyzing controversial issues.	See method outlined in D. Oliver and J.Shaver Teaching Public Issues in High School, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966.
Valuing. Development of skill in handling open-ended value questions. Knowledge of some major political ideas and traditions.	5. Is there an ideal political system? What are the meanings of democracy? 6. How does the Australian political system work?	Case studies in other times and places, e.g. Tribal society in New Guinea. Athenian democracy, Laissez-faire, contemporary guided democracy.	G.W. Hawkes, A Philosophical & Historical Rationale for a New Approach to Problems of Democracy.

Examples of Aims	Examples of Content	Examples of Approaches	Examples of Aids, References, etc. for Teachers and Students
Knowledge of trends and sequences.	A. Its origins.	British, indigenous and American elements.	Historical case studies depending on students' backgrounds in history.
Interpretation of documents.	B. Its constitutional basis.	Analysis of documents: Australian, U.S. & British constitutions compared.	
Understanding of the uses and limitations of voting as a political tool.	C. Electing leaders.	Case studies in Australian elections. Discussion of "one man one vote".	C.A.B. The Australian Electoral System D.Rawson Australia Votes, C. Burns Parties & People and other electoral studies.
Understanding of the nature of political pluralism.	D. The role of parties and of pressure groups.	Case studies in Party politics. Case studies in pressure groups, e.g. R.S.L.	L.Overacker Australian Parties. G.L. Kristianson The Politics of Patriotism.
Awareness of the divergence between form and function, ideal and reality.	E. How laws originate and are executed. Roles of: The parliamentary party. Cabinet Parliament. The Bureaucracy.	Interviews with local members. Films, videotapes of Parliament in action.	H. Mayer Australian Politics.

Examples of Aims	Examples of Content	Examples of Approaches	Examples of Aids, References, etc. for Teachers and Students
Awareness of the rights and the responsibilities of the citizen.	7. What are the legal rights and responsibilities of the citizen in our society? Why laws? Law, the individual and the group. How are laws changed?	Visit to law court. Visit by police spokesman. Visit by student leader. Legal case studies. e.g. The O'Shea Case.	G. Sawer The Australian and the Law. Penguin 1969.
Creative thinking which carries over into social action.	8. How can the individual and the group influence political decisions? Men and groups who influenced political life.	Political Activities e.g. Letters to the editor. Election campaigning. Social Service.	Films such as "The Big Fellow" A.F.Davies Private Politics. Novels on Australian politics.
	How powerful are: - The Australian Prime Minister? - A Minister? - A Backbencher? - A Senior Civil Servant? - A Judge?	The St.John case study.	See set of questions in Mehlinger Op.Cit., p.42 on individuals in politics.
	- Private citizens of varying kinds, e.g. Journalists? - Social groups of varying kinds?	The Newton Case	Practical Political Action: A Guide for Young Citizens. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Examples of Aims	Examples of Content	Examples of Approaches	Examples of Aids, References, etc. for Teachers and Students
Commitment to a case.	Political protest as a tool.	A study of underground newspapers.	
Development of Social Behaviours.	The strike as a political tool.	Debate on Teachers strike.	
Awareness of systems quite different from our own but attempting to solve similar problems. Decreasing ethnocentrism and developing tolerance.	9. How do other political systems compare with ours? Selected case studies, e.g. U.S.S.R., Indonesia, Ghana.	Comparative Election Studies The 1968 New Guinea Elections. The 1969 Thai Elections. The 1968 U.S. Elections.	E. Fenton. Comparative Political Systems. Holt, Reinhart & Winston. The Nuffield Election Studies in Britain. L.Lazarsfield. The People's Choice. Columbia Uni. Press.
Awareness of the complexity of political life and of the persistence of basic conflicts within society.	10. What are some of the persistent dilemmas of man in political life?		
	Electorate V Party	Role playing: The Loan Council	
	Commonwealth V State		
Skill in critical and reflecting thinking.	Majority V Minority		
	Secrecy V Public demand	Case Studies: Secret bases. Snooping devices.	See Harvard Social Studies Project Units, e.g. Religious Freedom, Rights of the Accused, Taking a Stand.

Examples of Aims	Examples of Content	Examples of Approaches	Examples of Aids, References, etc. for Teachers and Students
Skill in oral expression.	Special V "General" Interest.	Studies in Conservation, e.g., "The Colon Scandal"	Use of current newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and T.V. programmes.
	War V Peace.	The Politics of Vietnam.	
	Loyalty V Dissent.	Conscription.	
	Home V Foreign Interest.	Case studies in foreign policy, e.g. Automobile tariffs.	Inter-nation Simulation Kit. S.R.A.

What is to be Done

With further Lenin-like dogmatism, I would suggest the following:

1. Research is needed. For example, there should be major long-term experiments promoted to study the political knowledge, attitudes and interests of Australian children; students doing courses such as the Victorian Matriculation Social Studies Course might be compared with control groups not doing this course; the knowledge and attitudes of teachers might also be studued.[17]

2. Professional social scientists at their next annual conference might devote one or more sessions to political education in schools and consider what role their association can play in curriculum development.

3. Teams of social scientists and educators need to work together to develop aims and structures suitable for political science courses, or to suggest ways in which political science insights might be infused into other courses. The American Sociological Association, for example, has been preparing sociological "episodes" for use in existing school courses.[18]

4. Perhaps a federal committee might look into Political Education in Australia as one is now looking into Asian Languages and Culture in Australia. Certainly this conference should give every support to the development of a federally sponsored project on social science education as suggested by the 1967 UNESCO Seminar on "The Teaching of the Social Sciences at the Secondary Level."[19]

5. Teacher education will need serious attention and early consideration should be given to the development of pre-service and in-service courses for teachers. It is to be hoped that the new Colleges of Advanced Education will be liberal enough to include political science staff and courses in their schools of general studies.

Conclusion

"Tell it like it is" says the emerging generation. Unfortunately, we are still not really sure what our political system is, nor can we agree on what political science is. Since to wait for absolute answers is inconsistent with contemporary epistemology, we can surely put to work those concepts, generalizations, theories and descriptions of society which currently seem most useful in explaining our political system. By getting political scientists together with educationalists, courses or course units can be planned and teachers and pupils instructed in a view of contemporary political life which is far more comprehensive and realistic than that presented by current instruction.

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14. op.cit., p.219.

15. op.cit., p.65ff. See also his article in *Social Education*, 33, No.1 (January 1969).

16. The aims of the course are based on a modified version of Bloom's "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives." Aims, content and method also draw on the ideas being developed by the High School Curriculum Centre in Government at Indiana University reported by H. Mehlinger in The Study of American Political Behaviour. High School Curriculum Center in Government, 1967. For a historical approach to a course in politics see Patterson, F.K. Man and Politics. Cambridge: Educational Services Incorporated, 1965.

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THE TEACHING OF POLITICS IN ADULT EDUCATION

by OWEN HARRIES

Why do we teach politics in adult education? It is worth asking the question because any consideration of it will remind us that historically the study of politics has held a special place in the thinking of adult educators. It has not been thought of simply as another subject, like English literature or Biology. As far as one tradition of adult education is concerned, and it has strong claims to be regarded as the central tradition in Anglo-Saxon countries, the developing of an understanding of politics has been seen as one of the central purposes of adult education, either because adult education has been conceived of as an activity to redress the social balance by making the underprivileged more able to press their claims, or, more broadly, because its major function has been seen as the creation of conditions which would make democracy more real and more viable.

In less guarded - I will not say more unsophisticated - days adult educators made no bones about this. David Stewart, for example, subscribed to both the above views, on occasions saying that "the dominant attraction of the Association was that it could provide a service which would be invaluable to the Labour Movement"; and on others that the W.E.A. was a powerful force for engendering "an educational revival that will give to Australia a really intelligent, intellectual democracy, the first essential for social progress."[1] Similarly, in a book published in 1936 we find B.H. Molesworth, the Director of Tutorial Classes at the University of Queensland, maintaining that "the means of education have not kept pace with the needs of democracy" and that "if democracy is to function better, a much larger proportion of the adults in the community must be brought within the influence of some kind of adult education."[2] It would be easy to multiply such examples.

While the radical impulse has weakened somewhat in recent years (though it may be due for a revival) and while we have become more self-conscious about being academically respectable and objective, both introspection and observation make it clear I think that motivations, and particularly the concern with strengthening the conditions required for democracy, are still present and still shape our thinking about the teaching of politics to a considerable extent.

Let me quote again, this time from a very recent and as yet unpublished article by Dr. Desmond Crowley. In the article, after maintaining the "need" for adult education of various kinds, Dr. Crowley says:

> Further, there is an important need for developing a greater understanding among a large section of the general public of political questions, both domestic and international, and of problems of social and family life. Such adult education would have to be less demanding intellectually than university studies, and in many cases amount mainly to a widening of

> mental horizons. It raises the problem that a little learning may be dangerous; but more serious in practice is the difficulty of providing such education in evoking a response from those for whom it is meant. This is perhaps the greatest challenge facing adult educators, and no educator in any country has come near solving it.

There is much to discuss in this passage. First, while it is maintained that there is "an important need" for developing an understanding of politics it is not made clear in what sense that ambiguous word "need" is being used; yet its meaning is obviously important if it is given as the reason for teaching politics. Does it refer to a felt and articulated want on the part of the "large section of the general public" referred to? Hardly, for Dr. Crowley goes on to recognise the difficulty of evoking a response from those for whom it is meant, a difficulty which would hardly arise if there was a widespread, conscious demand waiting to be met. Does it refer to some latent wants which are unrecognised by the individuals themselves but which are in some sense "there" waiting to be made manifest? I hope not, for we are on very slippery grounds in talking about real wants or needs which are different from those actually expressed by people; but perhaps we can step around it by simply observing that Dr. Crowley provides no evidence of the existence of such latent needs and that a great deal of evidence would have to be provided to justify constructing a programme of education around them. It seems to me more probable that when he wrote this Dr. Crowley had in mind the sense of the term in which it might be said that something is "needed" or required in order to bring something else about, or to maintain something. I am not suggesting that there is anything at all wrong with using the term in this sense, though I think that if it is used thus, it is better to specify what it is needed for. I will take the liberty of assuming that what Dr.Crowley had in mind were the needs or requirements of a healthy democratic society; that he was speaking within a well established tradition in adult education which perhaps made the spelling out of the nature of the need seem superfluous.

Now the belief that democracy requires interested, informed and rational citizens in order to function tolerably well is by no means peculiar to adult educators. It is in fact deeply embedded in class democratic theory as that theory has been propounded by John Stuart Mill and others. But it is a belief which has been seriously questioned by some eminent political scientists in the last couple of decades. For a good deal of highly respectable empirical research has established that in Western democracies, the kind of citizen required by classical democratic theory is in fact a very rare bird. The average citizen, far from being informed, interested and rational, is ignorant, apathetic and irrational in his political behaviour.[3] And yet, despite this, it is pointed out that these democracies appear to function reasonably well, that, as Berelson puts it in an uncharacteristic phrase, "where the rational citizen seems to abdicate, nevertheless angels seem to tread".

This has led many political scientists to the conclusion that classical democratic theory was mistaken in its insistence on the importance of certain standards of interest and participation among citizens, and that democratic systems can in fact tolerate a great deal of apathy and ignorance with little or no ill effects. Indeed, many have gone further and argued that a substantial degree of apathy is not merely tolerable but desirable or "functional" in a democracy, in that it facilitates the flexibility, tolerance and compromise required for stability. If it did not exist, it is argued, and if the high level of interest and rationality postulated by the classical theory actually existed, the system might be subjected to such strains at rigidity as to make it unworkable.

All this, it seems to me, should be of considerable interest to adult educators, bearing in mind the kinds of traditions and commitments to which they are heir. I should point out that while the kind of argument I have just outlined has been widely accepted in recent years, it has also been strenuously attacked, especially, though far from exclusively, by political scientists with a "New Left" bias. They maintain that the argument mistakes the nature of the classical theory in treating it as a descriptive rather than a normative theory; that the revisionists exhibit a conservative and elitist bias; that they are more concerned with the stability of the system than the development of individuals; that in so far as "Western democracies" do not meet the requirements of democratic theory, the conclusion to be drawn is that to that extent they are not democratic - not that the theory is wrong and must be reformulated.

Even allowing that these counter-arguments have some force, however - and it seems to me that they have - they do not meet the initial argument that the stability and smooth functioning of the political systems in Western countries may well be facilitated by widespread political apathy. What they do is (a) challenge the claim of these systems to be regarded as democracies and (b) challenge the high priority placed on stability. But in so far as one does value those systems and their stability, whatever they are called, the argument will still be relevant. It at least calls into question the assertion that "there is an important need for developing a greater understanding among a large section of the general public of political questions", by suggesting that such an understanding might have consequences which many would consider adverse and that in any case the absence of such an understanding has no dire consequences for our political systems.

Another argument from a very respectable source challenges the assertion in an even more basic and direct way in that it casts serious doubt not on the desirability but on the possibility of developing such an understanding. In the course of his well known attack on the classical doctrine of democracy, Joseph Schumpeter argues that:

> ....without the initiative that comes from immediate responsibility, ignorance of politics will persist in the face of masses of information however complete and correct. It persists even in the face of the meritorious efforts that are being made to go beyond presenting information and to teach the use of it by means of lectures, classes, discussion groups. Results are not zero. But they are small. People cannot be carried up the ladder.

> Thus the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyses in a way which he would readily recognise as infantile within the sphere of his real interests. He becomes a primitive again.[4]

Schumpeter maintains that this is necessarily so, for while men can exhibit definiteness and independence of will, and rationality as far as "the decisions of daily life that lie within the little field which the individual citizens' mind encompasses with a full sense of its reality" (the world of his family, friends, job, hobbies, church, etc.), in the wider sphere of national and international politics they cannot do so because the necessary sense of reality and responsibility simply do not exist. The political universe is vague, illdefined, far off; it is something which is not comprehended clearly. There is an absence of effective volition in relation to it: "One has one's phrases, of course, and one's wishes and daydreams and grumbles: especially one has one's likes and dislikes. But ordinarily they do not amount to what we call a will....." Without a "pungent sense of reality" and with a reduced sense of responsibility, the level of intellectual performance must drop sharply and little can be done about it in the way of remedial action within the existing system.

It is worth pointing out that some of the arguments currently used by the New Left are in some ways similar to Schumpeter's, though different conclusions are drawn from them. By means of "repressive tolerance", the distractions of the mass media and the super-markets, and the manipulation of the myth of democracy, it is argued, the mass of the people are politically emasculated and rendered pliable and manageable. They are alienated from the system. Collectively these devices represent an almost foolproof system of control. "The realities of Western democracies", writes Christian Bay, a Canadian political scientist of the New Left, "keep stacking the cards in favour of the influentials and the privileged, who are therefore in a position to keep expanding their power and their influence, while the underprivileged are becoming less and less able even to talk and much less to act politically."[5]

Schumpeter and the New Left writers differ in that the latter tend to see conscious manipulation while the former sees merely objective circumstances at work. They differ too in the conclusions they draw from their analysis, for while Schumpeter concludes that democracy, if it is to refer to practising political systems, cannot mean government by the people and asks us to accept an elitist theory of democracy (as a competitive struggle among elites for the peoples' vote), the New Left concludes that democracy is only impossible given the existing socio-economic order, and advocates that revolutionary changes must be brought about in order to make a truly participatory democracy possible.

For our purposes the differences in their conclusions are less significant than the similarity of their analysis. For both of these analyses confront us with the question: are we engaged in an enterprise which must, in the nature of things, substantially fail? Given the nature of politics in modern states, is it futile to try to develop greater understanding of it among a large section of the general public - at least by the means available to us as adult educators? If, as Dr. Crowley maintains in the passage I have quoted, no adult educator in any country has come near to solving the problem of providing political education for a large section of the general public which evokes a response from those for whom it is intended, may this be due not to shortcomings in the educators but to the impossibility of the task?

I am sufficiently impressed by Schumpeter's argument, and the confirmation for it provided by the adult education activity I have participated in, to believe that *if* the task we set ourselves is the developing of political understanding in "a large section of the general public", then we *are* bound to fail substantially. But as I also believe that this is neither the task we *have* set ourselves, nor the one we *should* set ourselves, this does not leave me unduly pessimistic. As I see it our main interest is, rightly, in the relatively small minority which already has an interest in and some understanding of politics. We should modestly recognise that we cannot hope to do more than to cater for this interest, both because of the meagreness of our resources and the extreme difficulty of doing anything more; and even more modestly we should recognise that even in the education of this group we are only one agency among many.

But we need not be depressed by this either. For this minority I am speaking about constitutes the real political public in societies like ours. It includes those whom political sociologists identify as the "opinion leaders", individuals whose greater knowledge, interest and personality make them influential among their friends and acquaintances. It also includes potential recruits into the ranks of the political elite. If we are concerned with our impact on society, with changing political attitudes and activities in some way or another, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that concentrating on this group may be more effective than trying to influence the general public directly. Studies of communication stress the "two-step" flow of information: from the media to the opinion leaders, who select, organise and interpret information; and then from the opinion leaders to those members of the public who accept them as such.

If this view is accepted it has important implications. In the passage I quoted earlier, Dr. Crowley suggests that, as compared with intra-mural teaching, the treatment of politics in adult education must be diluted and made "less demanding intellectually", to the point indeed that much of it amounts to no more than a "widening of mental horizons". This is a more or less inevitable consequence of the task he has set adult educators. But if we see our audience as being more select (the process of selection being self-selection) this does not follow. The teaching of politics to those adults I have referred to above (who already constitute a sizeable proportion of our students) need not be at a lower level than intra-mural teaching, for by and large their experience and understanding of politics (as opposed to the fashionable ideological jargon and slogans) is, I would say, considerably greater than that of an average first or second year university class. Often their formal educational qualifications are also better.

So I would reject the view that there must be a lowering of intellectual standards. But I do think that politics should be taught *differently* from the way in which it is currently taught intra-murrally. Traditionally adult education teaching has been issue-oriented. It has concerned itself with substantive issues of policy. I would strongly urge that it continue to do so. I want to emphasise this because in recent years the trend in intra-mural political science has been very much the other way and there is a danger that adult educators, concerned perhaps to maintain their academic respectability, may follow suit.

Let me enlarge on this a little. What has often been referred to as the "behaviouralist revolution" which has occurred in political science during the last two decades has been a complicated and multi-faceted process.[6] A good deal of useful work, such as the voting studies referred to earlier, has resulted from it. But it also has characteristics which deserve, and increasingly receive, criticism.[7] One such characteristic is the very great stress placed on methodology and research technique at the expense of a study of the substance of politics. According to Bernard Crick this had already proceeded so far in America *in the thirties* that "men who had a profound ignorance even of the history of their own national politics, men who knew little but technique, were trained and began to teach."[8] Even when substantive questions are taken up the stress on precision and verifiability, as well as the concern with being "value free" means that they are handled in a timid and unilluminating way: "it is deemed more important to reach statistically testable conclusions than socially significant generalizations."[9] Again, while the behaviouralists do not ignore theory, their concern with developing "a common underlying social theory" which will integrate the social sciences often results in an excessively abstract dehydrated business of systems, models and functions in which it is hard to find anything relevant to politics and political issues as they are generally understood.

A good deal of disquiet has been expressed about all this within the ranks of political scientists. A few years ago an article appeared in the American Political Science Review with the significant title "Whatever Happened to the Great Issues?" and many of the critics are fond of quoting Alfred Cobban's description of the new political science as "a device, invented by university teachers, for avoiding that dangerous subject politics, without achieving science." More recently two political scientists have bitterly asserted that behaviouralism is producing an apolitical study of politics and turning the students of politics into "political eunuchs"; and that the political writing which seems most "vital, relevant and stimulating" is now to be found not in the academic journals, which "seldom seem to have anything of significance to say about those topics which appear to us urgently in need of intellectual scrutiny", but in the unspecialised journals of opinion.[10]

I am not suggesting that all this is an adequate or balanced assessment of behaviouralism; and I am aware that there is some danger in emphasising it, if only because so many are eager to believe it in order to justify not bothering to understand the new approach. Still, I do think that there is an important element of truth in it and I do think that adult educators would be ill advised to desert their traditional approach of focusing on issues in order to follow current trends. Even university students, who are to some extent "captive" and some of whom, having ambitions to be practitioners, recognise that they have to master techniques of research, tend to become restive and disenchanted when subjected to the new approach. How much more likely are adult students, whose reason for coming to classes is usually an interest in some political issues, likely to respond in this way? I would expect them to react to an approach characterised by a concentration on techniques and "conceptual frameworks" with their own version of Roy Campbell's immortal lines:

> "You have the snaffle and the curb all right,
> But where's the bloody horse?"

I am not arguing against theory and for a merely "current affairs" approach to the study of politics. But I am maintaining that the best approach to theory is through issues and that the two must never be very far divorced if teaching is to be effective, extra-murally or otherwise. Good teaching should build on and nurture existing interest and enthusiasm and not proceed in terms of abstract systems and models. It should develop an interest in theory by showing it at work, or by "finding" it, in the analysis of issues. In this respect I think that much adult education in politics is open to criticism because in dealing with current issues it is content merely to describe, and makes no serious attempt to use such issues to proceed further. But that is not a reason for not focusing on issues.

One further point: it would be disastrous if those teaching politics to adults were to adopt the jargon of the behaviouralists. While a jargon may sometimes be useful in providing a terminology more precise and emotively neutral than is otherwise available, it always carries a cost in that it tends to isolate its users from the uninitiated (if it does not it ceases to be a jargon). How high one will reckon this cost will depend on circumstances; for adult educators, who are concerned with a non-specialist public, the cost is always likely to be high. Besides, I think that one would be hard put to establish that the current political science jargon contributed either to precision or to flexibility and nuance.

In concluding I will make one point unrelated to what I have been saying, which is that as far as the question of how to teach politics is concerned, I think that in the two hour lecture-discussion session, especially when reasonably small numbers are concerned, adult education had a teaching method superior to most of those available in intra-mural work. In internal teaching there is almost invariably a gap in time, often of a week or more, between the giving of a lecture and any opportunity to discuss it. Very often the discussion takes place in seminar groups conducted by someone other than the person who gave the lecture and someone who did not even hear it. It is a common complaint by university lecturers that they do not know how their lectures are being received, and they sometimes resort to unsatisfactory polls of student opinion to try to remedy this. In contrast, the "instant feedback" of a two hour tutorial class enables one to judge very quickly whether one's presentation is successful and to make amends if it is not. It also enables students to discuss the contents of a talk while it is still fresh in their minds. If I end by saying that I hope that an interest in experiment will not result in a surrender of these advantages, I hope you will not think I am merely putting in a good word for the teaching method with which I am most familiar.

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POLITICAL EDUCATION THROUGH RADIO AND TELEVISION

by E. LLOYD SOMMERLAD

Broadcasting Media in Australia

Technical developments and changing social habits have increased enormously the significance of the broadcast media in Australia, as a primary source of news and information.

There are nearly 7 million working radio sets in Australia, and virtually all teenagers and some 90% of adults listen to radio at some time during each week. These listeners are served by 71 A.B.C. stations and 114 commercial stations. Average listening time varies with age and sex, being heaviest for housewives, and averages about 3 hours a day over-all.

Television sets in Australia number 2.75 million. The existing services provided by 39 national and 45 commercial stations cover about 96% of Australia's population. Some 85% of Australian homes have T.V. sets and average viewing time is about 3 hours a day.

Current Affairs Programmes

Commercial radio and television stations in Australia see themselves partially as news media and largely as entertainment media, and programme accordingly. Radio stations, on average, devote approximately 60% of air time to entertainment and T.V. stations about 80%. The percentages for A.B.C. programmes are substantially less.

Nevertheless, the immediacy of radio and the vividness of T.V. are characteristics particularly well adapted for news coverage and there is a growing tendency to exploit these strengths in the competition with the press.

Commercial radio stations in capital cities of Australia, spend 9.8% of air time on news broadcasts and an additional 3.6% on social and political topics. The A.B.C. devotes 9.1% of time to news and 8.2% of time to social and political items. Allowing for the fact that most commercial stations operate 24 hours a day while the A.B.C. broadcasts 126 hours a week, this means that metropolitan commercial and national stations each provide news and current affairs broadcasts for about 22 hours a week.

An analysis of television programme content in 1967-8 showed that 4.3% of time on metropolitan commercial stations was devoted to news and 4.1% to current affairs and information. The figures for the A.B.C. were 6.3% to news and 12.4% to current affairs and information. This amounted to an average of 8 hours a week on commercial stations and 16 1/2 hours on the A.B.C. Commercial stations in Sydney and Melbourne have increased this figure by introducing their "Today" shows between 7 and 9 on week-day mornings. The audience for these programmes, however, is very small.

Only a part of news and current affairs programming, of course, contributes in any direct way to "political education", but it is this comparatively small proportion of total broadcast time which is relevant to the present study.

The more important current affairs programmes on commercial radio take the form of interpretive comment by well known journalists such as Frank Chamberlain on the Federal political scene and Ormsby Wilkins on a wide range of topical subjects. In Australia, it is rare (but not unknown) for radio stations to "editorialize" in the way that newspapers do. Almost invariably the political commentators on commercial stations are given a free hand and express their own point of view and not a station "line" that has previously been determined. It is not uncommon for personalities on the one station to take opposing stands. Often commentators will be deliberately provocative to stir listeners to some definite reaction, either favourable or hostile; the station does not mind which. In the United States, editorializing is much more common - it is practiced by more than half radio and T.V. stations.

A significant innovation in radio programming in the last two years has been the "open line", which gives listeners the opportunity of asking questions and discussing problems on the air, while the rest of the audience eavesdrops. While the quality of listener participation varies enormously, these sessions may have real value if expertly handled, as they overcome a great defect in most mass media - the lack of a two-way flow of communication.

The A.B.C. programmes talks, interviews and features on political subjects, but by virtue of its constitution it must endeavour to be non-partisan. The broadcast of the proceedings of Federal Parliament - in itself a "political education" - attracts a very small audience. In Sydney for example, the surveys show only a few thousand people are usually listening, averaging about 4% of the total audience at that time.

On television, current affairs programmes consist of newscasts, interviews or comment on topical events, and documentaries. Most stations have topical magazine-type programmes, the most successful being the A.B.C. feature "This Day Tonight", which attracts about 25% of the T.V. audience tuned in at 7.30 on week nights in Sydney (but rather less in Melbourne). Examples of current documentary features are "Four Corners" and "Chequer-Board". They are more carefully produced and deal with a subject in greater depth. Other regular features, which have now been superceded are "Impact", the "Project" series, "Seven Days", "Encounter". This does not necessarily mean that T.V. stations have lost interest in current affairs. But the production teams of the leading commercial stations in Sydney and Melbourne now appear to be tied up in the early morning "Today" shows - a development which many viewers will regret.

A survey carried out by the Australian Broadcasting Control Board in Sydney and Melbourne in 1967-8 found that the "News", "This Day Tonight" and "Impact" were mentioned as "well-liked" programmes by more people than any other programme. However, in listener popularity, as indicated by ratings, while "News" was first, "This Day Tonight" was 9th and "Impact" 37th.

Multiple Ownership and Syndication

It is generally taken for granted that multiple ownership of mass media involves common editorial policies. Before examining this question, let us look at the extent of common ownership in Australia. Metropolitan newspapers have a controlling interest (i.e. more than 50%) in one radio station in Adelaide and Brisbane and two in Melbourne. In Perth, three newspaper groups hold a licence. A 25% interest is held by the Fairfax group in Macquarie Holdings, which controls one station in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Canberra. Several provincial newspapers also own or control the local radio station. There is no significant newspaper interest in about 65% of Australian commercial radio stations.

Of the 15 commercial television stations in Australian capital cities, 5 are wholly owned (or almost so) by metropolitan newspapers and 4 others owned 30% or more by the major newspaper companies.

Australian governments of all political persuasions are very sensitive about multiple ownership of the mass media, and as broadcasting (unlike the press) is subject to licence, they have been able to impose strict limitations on the number of radio or television stations which may be controlled by one person or company. The Broadcasting and Television Act provides that no one interest may control more than one metropolitan radio station in any State; more than four metropolitan stations in Australia, more than four stations in any one State or eight in the whole of Australia.

No one may control more than one television station in any capital city or more than two in Australia.

Control is strictly defined, and for the purpose of the Act, a holding of more than 15% of voting rights is deemed to constitute control of the company.

Multiple ownership of broadcasting facilities does, in theory, constitute a danger of concerted action, by those who control the media, to disseminate partisan political viewpoints and to suppress opposition comment. For this reason, the legislation preventing concentration of ownership is justified. But no evidence has been produced that ownership of media - to the extent that it exists in Australia - has resulted in regimentation of editorial attitudes on political issues or in colouring of news. In fact, the individual operation of Australian radio and television stations and the tradition of editorial independence makes such interference unlikely.

In practice, there is a much greater danger of a stereotyped approach to current affairs through the existing arrangements for syndication of news and sharing of television programmes. The major syndicator is, of course, the A.B.C. who provide a news service to all national radio stations and about 30 commercial stations, as well as all national T.V. channels. International news and some Australian news is provided from a central source, while State news is originated in the various capital cities.

Many commercial radio stations obtain their news coverage through some arrangement with a newspaper. A number of radio news relays have been established, providing a common service - for example, the Macquarie News Service in N.S.W., the Queensland Radio News Service coming from the Brisbane Courier Mail and the Melbourne Age service, taken by a number of Victorian stations.

Networks of commercial T.V. stations co-operate in the exchange of news items, while most country stations obtain their international and national news on relay. Current affairs programmes, apart from news, are circulated to a limited extent among T.V. stations in different States.

The Political Functions of Broadcasting

The principal function of radio and television in political education is to provide information and to create an awareness of political issues. As a second step they can, through commentary, discussion and documentary features, provide background, explanation and interpretation. Live interviews can probe beneath the surface and provide insight into the personality of the participants through their reactions to questions, their spontaneous answers and possibly off-guard comments.

While radio and television have the advantage of immediacy and spontaneity, the limitations of cost and time and the attention span of listeners and viewers handicap them in dealing with political subjects in great depth. This is one of the strengths of the press and the growing popularity of broadcasting has led to greater depth reporting and interpretive features by quality newspapers.

In Australia, radio and television do not set out to "educate" in a political sense. Their objective is to inform, and education is, none the less, enormous. What we know about public affairs and public figures is largely dependent on what the mass media tell us. We know very little by direct experience and observation. Radio and television are prime sources of political information and information is the first step from which political attitudes flow. The universality of the broadcast media, together with their intrusiveness and their wide coverage of political news, have increased political awareness among Australians.

In other countries, under different systems, of course, broadcasting has been used much more purposefully for political education. In developing countries, radio, especially community radio, overcomes the limitations of inadequate communications, illiteracy and poverty, and is a most powerful tool in building national unity, creating a political consciousness, encouraging involvement in community affairs and decision making, establishing political leaders and bringing the voice of the government down to the people.

In authoritarian countries with controlled media systems, broadcasting is a key instrument of political education. Radio and television, being government operated, are ready made channels for dissemination of propaganda, while unwanted information can be suppressed. Of course, the credibility of the media suffers under these circumstances, though too often, the listener does not know what he is missing. However, that is a matter for some other study.

Political Bias

In Australia, broadcasting enjoys high credibility. A study by Western and Hughes ("Politics", Nov. 1967) showed television rating higher than newspapers as the medium which "Presents things most intelligently" and "Presents the fairest, most unbiased news" and it rated equally with press for "Giving the best understanding of issues at the Federal election".

The A.B.C. is a "sitting shot" for the critics who constantly accuse it of political bias in presenting news and features. It is frequently under government pressure - more implied than overt - to publicise or suppress certain items of political importance, but on the whole the Commission manages rather well to maintain its independence. Its best answer to the critics who claim it is partisan, is that it is often accused of political bias by both sides of Australian politics.

It is commonly said that the Labor Party is at a great disadvantage in Australia, because the mass media is in the hands of its political opponents and it is denied the opportunity to disseminate its point of view fully and without distortion. This is not true, so far as radio is concerned. The strange fact is that although the Labor Party or the Trade Union movement controls several stations, none of them is used for political purposes and most take their news from other stations on relay. They are simply operated for commercial profit.

Government Regulations

Politicians, though anxious to use radio and television for personal publicity, are nevertheless fearful of its influence, particularly in elections. More than are prepared to admit it, would probably endorse a comment made recently by a British Cabinet Minister, Anthony Wedgewood Benn, who said: "Broadcasting is really too important to be left with the broadcasters....."

Fortunately, however,both the A.B.C. and the commercial stations in Australia, enjoy an independence as great, probably, as any radio system in the world. Nevertheless, restrictions are applied to them by the Broadcasting and Television Act, with regard to the broadcasting of political matter. Some of these, quite reasonably, demand the identification of the speaker or party making the statement or announcement, and provide for the script or recording to be retained for at least six weeks.

One provides that during an election period, reasonable opportunities must be given for broadcasting to all political parties represented in either House of Parliament. Others illustrate the sensitiveness of the Parliament about this matter. For example, no dramatization of any political matter current during the preceding five years is permitted.

The restriction which is most resented by broadcasters, is that which bans comment on candidates or issues or "matter referring to election meetings" after midnight on the Wednesday preceding the Saturday of a poll. This is considered an unwarranted interference with freedom of speech and the blackout prevents radio and television carrying out their proper functions and responsibilities at the climax of an election campaign. The Liberal, Labor and Country Parties in the Commonwealth Parliament all refused to support removal of this restriction when the Broadcasting and Television Act was being amended in May of this year.

The Political Influence of the Media

When endeavouring to assess the influence of radio and television on political attitudes and behaviour, it is almost impossible to separate them from other channels of information. They are only a part of total political communication and rarely can be isolated.

This is recognized in modern political campaigning methods, which are only beginning to be adopted in Australia. In America, a candidate for election is "packaged"; the same technique is used as in launching a new product on the market. The campaign strategy is based on research, and an image of the candidate is projected to win support in the opportunity areas. Use of all the mass media is backed up by direct mail and extensive public appearances and personal activity by the candidate and his organized supporters.

Television, however,has had a profound effect on political campaigning. It is much closer to reality than any other mass medium. While print makes people rational, television appeals to the emotions. Television places a far greater emphasis on personality and brings greater involvement of the audience. As the back-bencher rarely gets the opportunity to appear on T.V., the importance of the leader, who is most frequently in the news, is accentuated. Television, in short, has changed the relative importance of party, personality and issues, with personal qualities assuming greater significance.

Studies in the United States indicate that the fears of politicians about the undue influence of the media on political attitudes, are largely unfounded. A great deal of research has been undertaken on the process and effects of communication and particularly on the influences affecting voting behaviour.

Typical of the findings is this conclusion from a report of the American Institute for Political Communication following a 1968 survey in Milwaukee:

> The media have a substantial influence on the opinion-moulding process, but it is an influence which varies with the medium and the individual and is in constant competition with a broad range of other forces. The media, though among the most influential of organizations, are less influential than other types of forces operating on the individual. Issues, personality factors, and internal pressures appear to condition the

> individual's political attitudes to a greater degree than do organizations as such.
>
> Influence is a complex concept. There are distinctions between the extent to which the individual is dependent upon the media generally, the extent to which he is dependent for news alone and the degree to which he views the media as credible.

The mass media are not effective in changing attitudes which are firmly held. It is the primary community environment where people's attitudes are formed and it is personal influence in the face-to-face situation which produces the most change.

The main effect of a political campaign is to mobilize rather than convert. The media build awareness, stimulate discussion, but generally reinforce attitudes rather than change them.

Social scientists working in the area of opinion research, generally accept the premise that people engage in selective exposure, selective perception, selective retention and selective action. A person selects his exposure to a given medium when he tunes in to a particular station or channel or turns a deaf ear to a programme or chooses a newspaper or skips a page. People seem to use the mass media to help them to find and understand themselves. They react to individuals and programmes according to their own psychological frames of reference. Thus, they tend to look for and read or listen to statements which coincide with their own views or support their prejudices. Where both sides of a question are covered, they agree with the one to which they are pre-disposed; if an opposing opinion only is expressed, they reject it or distort it and successfully insulate themselves from conversation. (At least, that is how the argument for selective perception goes. No doubt it is true for the great majority of people whose political ideas are rigid, but perhaps more research is required among the 10% who are more openminded - the swinging voters who win or lose elections.)

According to this "selective" theory, people also unconsciously retain the facts they want to remember and which reinforce their own position. And when they act or speak in a way which can be traced to what they perceived and retained, then they have performed a selective act.

The now famous Kennedy-Nixon debates on television during the Presidential election campaign in 1960 provided an unusual opportunity for research on the influence of television. There were, of course, as always, many other factors affecting voting behaviour. But given the huge audience and exceptional public interest, and the closeness of the contest, some researchers concluded that the debates may have been crucial in winning the Presidency for Kennedy. A collection of research on the subject has been assembled in a book entitled "The Great Debates", edited by S. Kraus and published by Indiana University Press in 1961.

The findings support what we have been saying about the influence of television. It certainly threw a spotlight on the personalities of these two men, and gave Kennedy, the lesser known of the two, the chance to catch up on his opponent. The reinforcing role of the media was demonstrated. Those who favoured Kennedy were impressed by his maturity. Those who thought Nixon was well-informed thought, after the debates, that he was better informed.

In another study covered in "The Great Debates", Ben-Zeev and White reported that Kennedy's image appeared to have developed through gradual but consistent changes. The public did not appear to be reformulating their impressions of him. On the other hand, it was evident that Nixon's difficulty lay in the fact that they could not maintain a constant image of him over the period of the four debates. For Kennedy, the debates served the purpose of spurring on and reinforcing an image, which was apparently building up in sources outside the T.V. debates.

These two researchers reached the following conclusion:

> The differing effects of the debates on the campaigns of the two candidates suggest two possible roles for television in the communication of material on public questions. (1) A reinforcing role. In this role television has shown itself to be effective. It makes tangible, puts flesh on, vaguely felt trends of public opinion. In serving this function it is capable of solidifying public opinion and organizing it for action. (2) A moulding role. The results of this study of the debates leave the possibility of a "moulding" role for television still debatable. It is not possible to say here that isolated television communications, taken separately from the influence of other media and other sources of public opinion, are capable of playing the crucial role in reversing, changing, or shifting, the prevailing atmosphere or mood.

The Media as Gatekeepers

The major media in Australia endeavour to be objective in their news coverage, and by and large devote time or space to both sides of controversial political issues and to the viewpoint of both the Liberal and Labor Parties. Partisan opinions are generally restricted to editorials, to individual commentators, or to bi-lined features.

All the media, however, are constantly exercising - albeit unconsciously - a vast influence on public opinion, simply through the process of selection of those items which will be broadcast or published.

In the communication process, the mass media are "gatekeepers", sifting out, rejecting, or allowing to pass through to the wider public, the thousands of messages which come to them from all sources. In our society, of course, this gatekeeping function is carried out without the interfering intrusion of officialdom.

But as political opinions must be based on political information, what is allowed to pass through the sifting process to the mass media audience is highly significant. Every person in the news "chain" has to decide how much of the message he will pass on. The witness of an event or the reporter at a meeting makes the first selection of what is to be reported. This goes to a sub-editor, to be cut or rejected or built upon by further interviews. If the item is handled by a newsagency, it is further screened before transmission to another city or country where each of the media on the receiving end of the line go through the process of evaluating the item again. Finally, the very influential decision is made whether the story shall be highlighted in a news broadcast or given page one treatment under banner headlines or tucked away inconspicuously.

These evaluations along the communication chain are highly personal; they reflect each individual's judgment as to what is important, interesting, amusing, sensational, unusual; no doubt they reflect his values and his biases. But the fact that there are so many people in the chain and that there are, simultaneously, various chains, are important safeguards in the system against distortion and suppression.

Radio and television face particular problems in news selection because of their limitations in time, compared with a newspaper's freedom, to add more pages to accommodate more news. Thus, the broadcasting media are compelled to cut stories ruthlessly, and to discard all but the most important news. Consequently, items which find a place in the pre-digested newscasts of radio and television have a strong impact - if only because there are fewer of them.

As an illustration of this problem of news selection, the Australian Broadcasting Commission news room receives about 200,000 words a day from newsagency services, their own reporters and correspondents. This already represents a very great condensation of the original news reports. Five 15 minute news sessions enable only about 10,000 words a day to be broadcast and much of this is repetition of earlier news bulletins.

These acts of selection and emphasis in presentation are probably the most significant taken by the media in influencing public opinion. They are probably more important than comment and editorializing - partly because they are more subtle. Readers and listners and viewers, as we have pointed out, have response mechanisms which enable them to reject what they don't like, question the credibility of what doesn't sound reasonable and resent any attempt to mislead them.

But radio and television, as well as the press, are the main sources of the political information which enables people to make their judgments and form their own opinions.

POLITICAL EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRESS

by JOHN BENNETTS

Politicians, public servants and pressmen have long assumed that one of the main functions of the press is to be an instrument of political education.

"The first duty of the press", declared The Times in 1852, "is to obtain the earliest and most correct intelligence of the events of the time, and instantly, by disclosing them, to make them the common property of the nation........ The press lives by disclosure: whatever passes into its keeping becomes a part of the knowledge and history of our times.......

"The duty of the journalist", The Times added, "is the same as that of the historian - to seek out the truth, above all things, and to present to his readers not such things as statecraft would wish them to know but the truth as near as he can attain it".[1]

The British Royal Commission on the Press 1947-49 cited the performance of the press "as an instrument of information and instruction" as the first of three relevant standards by which the press should be judged. "The press is not purely an agency for the political education of the public, much though democratic society may need such an agency", the Commission said in its report.

"On the other hand, it cannot be considered purely as an industry: the inescapable fact that it is the main source of information, discussion and advocacy imposes upon it responsibilities greater than those resting on an industry which does not deal in information and ideas".[2]

More recently, and closer to home, a journalist turned politician remarked that journalists had "made the delivery of information and opinion on public affairs their peculiar perogative".[3]

The speaker was Mr. (now Sir) Paul Hasluck. He was speaking, in 1958, on the theme "Telling the Truth in a Democracy".

Having acknowledged the role of the press in public affairs, Mr. Hasluck went on to say this about the political journalist:

> He has a hard path, for most of the conditions of his daily work would lure him into falsehood and I would imagine that personal honesty and good intentions would not be enough, but that only a man armored by intellectual power, supported by a strict professional code and uncumbered by malice or ambition could succeed. There are not many good political journalists.

The Canberra correspondent of a Melbourne daily has asserted, rather brashly, perhaps, that "despite the contributions of police roundsmen, sporting writers, financial journalists and the rest, political journalism is now - as in the beginning - the heart and soul of a newspaper and the main reason for the newspaper's existence".[4]

Newspaper editorials are daily reminders that the press sees itself as an educator of public opinion - and as an educator of politicians as well as of ordinary people. The editorials abound in advice to politicians about how they should manage their own, their parties' and the community's affairs.

In 1961, for example, the Sydney Morning Herald constantly and angrily criticised the economic restrictions imposed by the Federal Government to curb a dangerous boom. Many people believe the Sydney Morning Herald helped significantly to bring the Government so close to defeat in the 1961 election that Prime Minister Menzies and his colleagues quickly abandoned the measures to which the Herald had objected.

Sir Robert Menzies would be unlikely to admit that he changed course because the Sydney Morning Herald told him to do so. He would prefer this account of how his Cabinet reversed the policies which earned the Liberal-Country Party coalition so much unpopularity: At the first Cabinet meeting after the election, badly-shaken ministers launched into an agonising reappraisal of economic policy. Most of them argued that to regain public support and a reasonably parliamentary majority they should, as quickly as possible, abandon the credit squeeze, the higher taxes and other restraints they had imposed to end the boom.

But a few of them said the government should not act too hastily or too obviously. People might say the government was simply stealing the policies on which the Labor Party had campaigned and that would never do. Menzies is said to have cut short the dithering with this retort - "And if people say we are stealing Labor's policies, so what, gentlemen, so what? May I remind you that a lot of people who normally vote for us in fact voted for the Labor Party. They did not want Calwell for Prime Minister, but they did want his policies. All we have to do is take over his policies and they will vote for us. So let us get on with it".

But that is by the way.

In urging abandonment of the economic restrictions, the Sydney Morning Herald undoubtedly believed it was acting in the public interest.

But different newspapers have different views of public interest. Throughout 1961, while the Sydney Morning Herald was assailing the government's economic policies, the Melbourne Age was defending them. The Age argued that the policies, although painful, were necessary.

Some newspaper editorials are obviously designed to serve the political, commercial or social ambitions of the controllers of the press. They should, perhaps, be regarded as propaganda rather than as contributions to political education. However, they may be unintentionally educative when, as sometimes happens, they disclose alliances between particular newspapers and particular politicians or parties.

One may well ask why some newspapers played down or dismissed the criticisms levelled recently at the private and official conduct of the Prime Minister. "What the mass media have failed to tell, what some have tried actively to conceal, is now bruited abroad by word of mouth", said Mr. Edward St. John in an address at Sydney University on April 14. He went on - "The Bush telegraph comes into its own once more..... the Australian mass media, for one reason or another, have largely failed to tell the public the news which they have a right to hear. In the result, oral gossip, newsletters and little magazines have come in to fill the vacuum". Unfortunately, Mr. St. John offered only a general explanation for the behaviour of the mass media in the Gorton affair. He said the diversified business interests of newspaper proprietors often depended on government goodwill and some newspapers may have had business reasons for wanting to avoid offending the government.

However, most editorials might be fairly described as educative, in the broad sense. The press might also be said to be engaging in political education when it publishes letters to the editor, feature articles, book reviews, news items and cartoons dealing with politics.

Indeed, political cartoons may do more to influence public opinion and political behaviour - and in that sense may contribute more to political education - than the other kinds of political material published in newspapers.

One way and another, the controllers of the Australian press devote much time, money, manpower, nervous energy and newsprint to the coverage of Politics. Despite their natural desire to increase circulation and profits, they publish many political features and news items which, one suspects, are read by relatively few readers.

Professor K.S. Inglis offered a persuasive explanation for this phenomenon when he wrote that newspaper proprietors "want not merely to be rich but to shape human destiny". He went on:

> Australian newspapers have certain characteristics which suggest that their owners could be making a little more money if they were not inhibited by an old-fashioned and at bottom liberal notion of what a newspaper should be. Leading articles are preserved for reasons that are not commercial. Book reviews usually cost more than they earn. Foreign news could probably be got more cheaply without a significant loss of revenue from sales or advertising.[5]

One might go farther than Professor Inglis and assert that the Melbourne Herald, for example, could cease to maintain its own staff correspondent in Singapore,rely wholly on agency reports from South-East Asia, save around $30,000 a year, and suffer no loss of circulation or revenue.

Newspapers which maintain staff correspondents in Asia receive little or no commercial benefit but, I believe, do contribute to the political education of their readers.

Lord Casey, speaking at a Summer School in 1966, summed up his case for more and better reporting of Asian affairs by Australian journalists for Australian newspapers in this way -

> The press has an important influence on the conduct of international affairs.... the better the Press does its job of factual objective reporting and comment, the more sensible is any country's conduct of international relations likely to be, by reason of the building-up of an informed public opinion.[6]

Lord Casey added that Australian dependence on British and American publications for news about Asia smacked of 'journalistic colonialism'.

Shortly afterwards the Australian newspaper proprietors took an unprecendented step - they shared the cost of an aircraft which took a party of Australian journalists on Prime Minister Holt's first tour of Asia.

For lack of sound evidence that the press does in fact help, and not hinder, the political education and development of the Australian community we should, perhaps, regard these investments in political coverage as acts of faith. But the faith is widely shared. For example, the External Affairs Department maintains a public information section which is required to supply factual information and background information to the press.

> The Department's aims in this field are to assist the development of a broader public understanding of Australian foreign policies, contributing to an improvement in the accuracy and comprehensiveness of daily reporting of foreign affairs, and to avoid as far as possible the publication within Australia, or overseas, of inaccurate or misleading statements about Australian policies which might be damaging to Australia's interests.[7]

Measured in terms of manpower and newsprint employed, the greater contribution to political education made by the Australian press undoubtedly is its coverage of national politics.

Here in Canberra, more than 60 journalists work full-time in the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery, supplying news about the legislative and executive branches of national government to newspapers and periodicals and to radio and television news services throughout Australia.

These are the main groups of news sources covered by the Canberra correspondents -

The two Houses of Federal Parliament, the Parliamentary committees, and the Parliamentary parties.

Federal Cabinet, the Ministers, and the departments and agencies they administer.

The Commonwealth and foreign diplomatic missions.

The national institutions, other than governmental departments and agencies, which have headquarters or branches in Canberra; for example, the National University, the Academy of Science, the Institute for International Affairs, the Institute of Public Administration.

The national headquarters of interest groups and pressure groups, such as the Returned Servicemen's League, the chambers of manufactures and commerce, primary producers' organisations, and the federal secretariats of political parties.

Conferences, conventions and seminars, sponsored by these and other organisations.

Meetings of organisations concerned with international or federal-state cooperation, including various United Nations bodies, the ANZUS and SEATO Councils, the Loan Council and Premiers' Conference, and the joint organisations concerned with agriculture, education, transport and other activities involving Federal and State governments.

Journalists stationed in Canberra obtain information from and about these news sources by directly reporting meetings, by interviewing individuals, by scrutinising official statements, and, when they have time, by investigation and research to obtain the news stories which are not handed out, and which the authorities concerned often would prefer to keep from the public.

The extent and complexity of the Canberra news beat makes specialisation among journalists desirable.

In London and Washington the newsgathering organisations employ gallery reporters who do nothing but report the proceedings of the British Parliament and the U.S.Congress. There are lobby correspondents who specialise in reporting on Cabinet and party meetings. There are diplomatic and defence correspondents, science writers and various other specialists.

In Canberra there is not much specialisation; the journalist here tends to cover a wider field in less depth than his counterpart in London or Washington. But specialising is increasing and as the news organisations expand their Canberra bureaus, journalists are finding time for more of the investigative reporting which many of them believe is their most important function - because so many decisions affecting the community, or large sections of it, are made behind closed doors.

Like the newspaper proprietors described by Professor Inglis, most, if not all, of the Canberra journalists 'want not merely to be rich but to shape human destiny' - although few of them would use such elegant language to express their sense of vocation.

Most of them would, however, endorse the assertion made in the Australian Journalists' Association textbook on journalism that -

> The duty of the political journalist is to report any information which will help citizens to assess the capacity of any individual or organisation seeking or holding public office. If a politician or official or candidate for office is incompetent or corrupt, the public should be told. If a political party is deeply divided on major issues, the political journalist should report the facts to the electorate that has to decide whether or not to elect that party to office.... If Cabinet, or a political party, or a government department, is planning a major policy change, the duty of the political journalist is, in the words of The Times, to obtain 'the earliest and most correct intelligence' so that citizens who may be affected have their chance to play their part in the policy-making process by bringing pressure to bear on their elected representatives.[8]

May I now quote from an address which also explains, but in more colourful language, how Canberra journalists try to contribute to the political enlightenment and education of their fellow citizens, and why it is important that they should do so.

The speaker was Mr. Maxwell Newton, former Treasury official, former Canberra correspondent for The Sydney Morning Herald, former editor of The Financial Review and The Australian, publisher of controversial newsletters, and managing editor of Perth's newest paper, The Independent. Speaking at the 1968 Journalism Summer School on the theme 'Communication - Key to Good Government', Newton said:

> .....this is the era of big government. It is also the era of big corporate business. Big government and big corporations, along with big unions in many cases, are getting closer and closer together. As government, business and even the unions find they have more and more business to do with each other, they are less and less willing to discuss their business in the open. This is one reason for the decline of Parliament as a forum where the meat of government business is discussed. The other reason is the rise of executive power and the enormous expansion of the influence of the civil service. As paid officials take over the main direction of planning and administration up to the last level of authority, in government, in business and in the unions, there is a drawing together and a need at most times for the business conducted between the officials of these three great sources of financial and political power to be conducted in secret....
>
> Thus, any journalist who believes he will discover more than the mere froth of government activity by listening to debates in Parliament or even by making a few sketchy contacts with Ministers is, in my view, deeply misunderstanding the nature of the work of government today and the connections that work has with business and with the unions. A well informed journalist, injected into the smooth pattern of relations between officials within the government machine and between those officials and officials managing businesses and unions, must eventually be dangerous....

> For a well-informed journalist will not be completely vulnerable to the mass of doctored information which is the normal stuff voluntarily released by governments, businesses and unions today. The art of the public relations man and the propagandist is to confuse and muddy public discussions. My own experiences from time to time looking from the other side of the fence suggest that it is depressingly easy for the propagandist to win this little battle.[9]

The task of describing what the press does in the name of political education has been fairly simple and straightforward. It is less easy to say who reads the political material in the press and what effect that material has on the readers. The reason is that there has been very little systematic study of the political impact of the mass media in this country.

American social scientists have done more work on mass communications, and one of them recently offered this summary of conclusions about the political effects of the mass media -

> Studies of voter behaviour have shown that (in an election campaign) voters look for and read the statements of the candidate they already support. This process of selective perception means that as long as each side has its statement somewhere in the newspaper, the voter will be reinforced in his views - not converted - even by a paper which supports the other side. The paper may favor one side, but if it reports both, the voter can successfully insulate himself against conversion..... The main effect of a political campaign is to mobilise, not to convert. It revives the lagging interest of the average voter, but as it does so, it also revives whatever latent convictions he already had.... the main effect of the mass media in an election is to draw the election and the issues in it to the public's attention. Once the people have become aroused, their decision in the short run is more highly influenced by personal stimuli than by the mass media. Personal influence by family, friends and neighbours takes over whenever the media raise a political issue to that level of public attention where people talk about it face to face.... The free mass media - that is, media which allow expression to diverse and opposed views, as the American media do - do not change or control people's opinions much in the short run.[10]

In his monumental book about the Australian press, Professor Henry Mayer says he knows of only two very limited surveys of the reading of political material in Australian newspapers, and two surveys of how readers ranked political material in their order of preferences.

A survey conducted in the N.S.W. electorate of Parkes during the 1958 Federal election disclosed that 77 per cent of the men and 52 per cent of the women claimed to have read advertisements of political speeches in the press.

In a 1960 by-election in Victoria, 46 per cent of the respondents said they had not bothered to follow the election news in the papers.

The two surveys of reader preferences were conducted by the Hobart Mercury newspaper in 1950 and 1954. The surveys showed that the most popular articles in the paper's Saturday magazine were those dealing with the Royal Family (read regularly by 57 per cent of the readers); next came Tasmanian political news read by 56 per cent, followed by Canberra political news read by 42 per cent.[11]

After studying the results of British and American studies, Mayer asserts that to treat the Press as being predominantly a medium of political information and a forum of public affairs 'is about as misleading a perspective as it is possible to have'.[12]

He says that concern about the alleged political influence of the press rests on four separate assumptions. These are that the press is the basic source of political information for most people; that this information determines or at least influences public opinion; that there is an intimate link between opinions and action; and that public opinion and action are in turn a major force shaping governmental policies and cultural standards.

Mayer thinks this Press-Information-Opinion-Action-Policy chain is weak at every link. The press may be the main source of information, he says,but this information may not basically affect public opinion. And it is by no means clear in what ways and to what extent modern governmental policies are shaped by public opinion.

Mayer's conclusion, which he confesses is a hunch, is that the influence of the press in the community varies in proportion to the other sources of information available to people. He thinks the press is likely to be least important in shaping people's political attitudes and behaviour, and most important in forming their social attitudes.

He suggests that studies of political decision-making, and their relation to the press, will tell us more about the political influence of the press than Gallup-style surveys of public opinion.

My own conclusions, or hunches, are similar. Like Mayer, I am uncertain about the effects of public opinion on government policy. I do suspect, however, that a government aims to mould public opinion and so promote public support, or even create public demand, for the policies the government wants to implement. This, I suggest, is a prime purpose of the large and growing expenditure by government on its own information agencies and public relations officers.

But the available evidence indicates that the various mass media - press, radio, television, government information services, and commercial public relations officers - affect the community's political attitudes only gradually and over a long period, not suddenly and radically. The effect of mass communication on public opinion may be, as someone has suggested, like the effect of water dripping into a sponge. For a time, the effect is imperperceptible, but eventually the sponge becomes saturated and starts to ooze water. Eventually, perhaps, public opinion is changed sufficiently by the media to produce a change in political behaviour.

We are far from an understanding of the part the press plays in this process, and the task of understanding the role of the press has undoubtedly been complicated by the advent of the electronic media with what Marshall McLuhan calls 'instant information'.

Do the print and the electronic media teach politics to different or overlapping audiences? Do they give their respective audiences the same view of politics? What are the political consequences of the pattern of ownership, structure and control of our mass media? What kinds of people should we be recruiting as political communicators and what training should we give them?

There are many questions but, regrettably, few answers.

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POLITICAL EDUCATION THROUGH POLITICAL PARTIES

by SENATOR S.H. COHEN, Q.C.

I feel privileged to be asked to make a modest contribution to the discussions at your Conference. The Australian Labor Party and the Trade Unions have had since their early days a close interest in adult education. Indeed, we have long been accustomed to the term "workers' education". And I have had some personal experience as a W.E.A. lecturer in Victoria, taking, in the immediate postwar years, a course in politics described as "Democracies in Action". Looking back nostalgically to those days, I sometimes wonder whether I was not doing more for education then than now.

I can never face an audience of keen-witted searchers after truth without wondering how aptly one might seem to fit Adlai Stevenson's celebrated definition of a politician as a statesman who approaches every question with an open mouth. But, even if the barb be sharper than necessary, and in jest, it is never a consolation to recall that for every open mouth there are many closed minds.

Education opens minds. An educated democracy is a strong democracy. The education explosion in the post-war years has taken many forms and there is, I believe, in Australia in increasing awareness of political problems. There is more of it in the schools, stimulated wherever "social studies" appears as a curriculum subject and made inevitably by the fact that a much higher percentage of children stays at school today until the later secondary years. And, consequentially, the interest in adult education or further education is spreading, both quantitatively (in terms of numbers of students) and qualitatively (in terms of variety and content of subjects). And the newest and most persuasive of the mass media, television, has introduced many people, young, middle aged and old - to the discussion of subjects with political content - the sine qua non of political education.

The political parties constitute one source of enlightenment for those who seek political education. And their beams are spread widely enough for the light to fall on many and diverse groups and individuals of all ages, with grossly uneven degrees of political awareness and with an astonishing variety of stubbornly ingrained or acquired prejudices, which the holders are usually pleased to call "convictions" or "opinions".

The questions to which we are seeking an answer in this session are:

How do political parties perform their function as educators?

To what extent can the quality of educative communication between parties and people be improved?

And perhaps I should add a third, looking at these problems, as you would expect, through the questing eyes of a democratic socialist:

What special challenges are presented to a party of radical reform in the working out of such relationships?

I shall not attempt to deal at length with the educational activities of political parties within their own organizations. There is a constant stream of pamphlets, booklets, campaigning literature and periodic journals produced by the parties to develop the knowledge and enthusiasm of their own members. There are also regular radio programmes in some States. In the case of the Australian Labor Party, a good deal of complementary material is produced by the trade unions, prominently covering political issues with an industrial content. This is political education, but in a rather specialized sense, and I believe this Conference would not expect me to catalogue these publications. Nor shall I attempt to deal separately with educational activity carried on by the Party's organizational structure and the Parliamentary Parties, Federal or State. I propose to deal with the wider questions raised by the subject of this Conference.

Some definition of terms may be necessary. "Political education" means, in the first place, the process of learning to understand the nature of political phenomena and the way political decisions are made - in short, the facts of political life. This would include some appreciation of the inter-relationships between the main arteries of political communication (the apparatus of government, the political parties, the pressure groups and the mass media), which share one thing at least in common - complexity.

Secondly, "political education", if it is to be a meaningful exercise, must be the basis upon which positions or attitudes are established on a whole range of political (including social and economic) problems and issues. So that a "politically educated" person is not simply one who understands how the thing "ticks", but one who has formed judgments and opinions from that understanding and who has been moved to some degree of personal participation or involvement or commitment. Professor John Goodlad of the University of California, contributing to a volume published in the U.S.A. in 1964 by the Council for the Study of Mankind, scathingly lampoons as the living symbols of imperfection in education and schooling "the intellectual man standing disdainfully uncommitted and the educated man standing impeccably uninvolved". The central aim of education, he asserts, is to develop rational men who do not sin against themselves and their kind. And he regards the rational man as not only committed to "the rich fruits of inquiry" but as prepared to act upon "insight rendered compelling by commitment".

It is a central argument of this paper that the political education programme of a political party, whilst it may have the obvious objective of winning votes, must also, if it is to survive, seek to attract recruits to the ranks of active workers. Most people taking part in political activity are concerned to a greater or lesser degree with attempts at persuasion, either on the giving or receiving end. This is what Lord Windlesham, in his book "Communication and Political Power" (1966), calls "politically influential communication", whether directed to the electorate at large or to Party members and supporters at the grass-roots level.

Adlai Stevenson took many opportunities when talking to young people at commencement "exercises", to stress the obligation of political involvement as the proper consequence of political education.

"You have", he said on one occasion, "a responsibility to acquaint yourselves with the political life of your country, to interest yourselves in the selection of candidates and the operation of the elective machinery. To be a responsible citizen you can't just criticise. You must participate in political activity. It's your Government and you must help if you want to keep it that way."

If he had been operating in an Australian context, at this moment, he might have been unable to avoid the temptation to add: "And equally you must help if you want to get rid of it". To Stevenson, as his biographer Herbert Muller recalls, the arts of winning elections were a quite legitimate concern for men of principle. This was an inevitable corollary of his mission of "educating the people".

The object of political education is to help people reach a state where they are not only studying and evaluating persons, ideas, events and movements but are ready themselves to participate in some of the stuff of politics. To my mind, the educative process has failed, in part at least, if it leaves people full of facts and figures and other basic materials of information and analysis but without any desire to contribute, however modestly, to the improvement of the world they live in. What kind of education is it that produces the "disdainfully uncommitted and the impeccably uninvolved"? I look at the challenges at home and abroad facing men today, at what the distinguished American journalist, James Reston, in his "Artillery of the Press", calls the "endless torrent of intractable issues", and I ask what I can and should do about them, or some of them.

Let me identify just a few of the major areas where urgent human endeavour is likely to be productive of some degree of advancement for our fellow men.

The great issues of war and peace; Vietnam and the use of Australian forces overseas; conscription and conscientious objection; the battle for men's minds; the explosive growth in world population; hunger, poverty and illiteracy at home and abroad; scientific and technological advance and man's capacity to remain master of his material world and its innovations; Australia's trustee obligations in Papua-New Guinea; health, education at all levels and social welfare; development of Australia's human and material resources; the revolt of young people in the Universities and schools.

Contemplating this catalogue of things requiring to be done, one can be forgiven for the somewhat emotional reaction that, if political education stopped short of stimulating personal involvement in these issues, then the political parties would have failed to communicate effectively with the people. And the implications would be particularly unhappy for a party seeking far-reaching economic and social change.

But I think there are grounds for genuine optimism, because the Australian community has in recent years begun to show signs of maturity in matters where the community conscience is involved. Take the massive vote at the referendum in 1967 in favour of giving the Commonwealth power to legislate on matters affecting the aboriginal people and of repealing those constitutional provisions which discriminated against them. Though it sprang in part from a mass feeling of guilt about our shocking neglect of the aboriginal people, it was also something of a triumph for those groups which had campaigned for years for reform, and which had the active support of the Labor Party and in the fullness of time a commitment from the Government parties.

Or take the case of John Zarb. Political education from near and far has helped to transform the issue from one affecting the young man's personal conscience - namely, his conscientious objection to taking part in the war in Vietnam - to one affecting the community's conscience - namely, the community's sense of shame that the law can trample on a young man's conscience and send him to gaol for no purpose other than to punish him for his beliefs. And so the people have, virtually by consensus, welcomed the decision to release John Zarb on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

And I can detect a new sense of engagement, of involvement by increasing numbers of people in the major community issues - health, education, welfare, national development and the need to establish constructive relationships with our neighbours in Asia.

I would not claim that these things should stand solely to the credit of the Labor Party; but I do most emphatically assert that the political education campaigns waged by the Labor Party have contributed powerfully to the development of enlightened attitudes and to the new priority which the community seems to be ready to accord to human rights and personal freedoms.

The contribution is twofold. First, the presentation by the Labor Party of different and alternative proposals or policies has generated public debate and has helped to question established assumptions and shape new attitudes in the community. In many instances, new situations emerge and what was previously unacceptable comes to be regarded as reasonable, or perhaps some modified position emerges from the welter of discussion which at a politically appropriate moment becomes part of the government's approach. Sometimes this happens so smoothly that the government switch goes almost unnoticed and the press praises the government for its realism and conveniently omits to mention that what has now been adopted is close to what the Labor Party has long been advocating. I mention Vietnam and I need say no more about it.

I mention one other example. For a decade and more, the Labor Party, speaking in tune with the education-conscious sections of the community - teachers, parents, educators of all kinds - advocated greater Commonwealth involvement in education and the financing of education, a Commonwealth Department of Education and Science and a national inquiry into pre-school, primary, secondary and technical education. Until 1963, Sir Robert Menzies turned that ample back of his on all proposals to interest the Commonwealth in areas other than Universities. But he recanted at the 1963 election and strode forward (politically speaking) with secondary and technical school scholarships and science blocks; Mr Holt in 1967 created a Commonwealth Department of Education and Science, and we now have a burgeoning, though as yet piecemeal and inadequate, Commonwealth involvement in education.

And so short is the public memory, except with those who are involved in the debate on the education crisis, that the Government is now permitted to claim the credit for policies which it came to espouse with all the enthusiasm of a reluctant dragon. In an important sense, the people, with the help of the Opposition, have succeeded in educating the Government on some of the issues.

Secondly, the Labor Party's contribution to political education may be measured by its efforts to establish a climate of opinion in which the educational process can flourish. Insistence upon elementary civil liberties, crusading campaigns against repressive legislation, resistance to arbitrary censorship laws and procedures and other restrictive techniques of government - these are all part of a long-sustained attitude. It has helped powerfully to keep open the lines of communication and the areas in which free decisions can be made by the people.

Such a climate is essential for political maturity. It exists where the citizen's "right to know", especially his right to know what is done by governments in his name, is secure. Conversely, such a climate itself helps to secure this right to know. Armed with knowledge, each of us can better evaluate in his own way not only the information itself but the motives of those seeking to withhold the information. It must, of course, be conceded that there are areas of activity in which governments are involved which may need the protection of secrecy. But these areas should be defined and any restrictions must not be used merely to protect the government from its critics. In seeking to facilitate these freedoms and to make the public aware of the defensive techniques of the "non-change" parties, the Labor Party continues to perform an educative task of great importance.

I want to say something now about the technique of political communication. The electorate is not monolithic, and no political party can approach it as if the same message would receive the same response from everyone. With some electors, the most sensitive part of the human anatomy is what Chifley called "the hip pocket nerve". At the other extreme, there is a high minded idealism which scorns the comforts and amenities of a consumer civilisation. But, conceded that different people react differently to a particular approach, political parties must still decide whether and how to compartmentalise their appeals to different sections of the community. This, of course, is a task of enormous difficulty, for it is doubtful whether even those with access to the mass media have any clear sense of the concrete and specific interests of different elements in the population. The surveyors of public opinion have taught us this much at least, that different people make up their minds at election time on different issues. And whilst the pollsters can tell us what percentage of people will vote for or against a particular proposition, they do not appear to have developed any method of assessing what percentage of those on either side of the argument feel sufficiently strongly on the issue to make it the decisive one.

This is not an argument for splitting the appeal into many compartments and merely telling each group what it wants to hear. A political party (especially one of radical reform) must retain its integrity and expound its platform and its programme on all fronts and on all relevant occasions. But in terms of meaningful communication, it may often be crucial that the message does not get lost by getting scrambled up with proposals on a host of other subjects. For example, there are people who will respond to the Labor Party's call for a national science policy who may not feel strongly about the abolition of the means test or a national superannuation scheme. At the same time, those to whom the questions of overriding importance are the withdrawal of Australian troops from Vietnam and the end of conscription may not be sufficiently warmed by a manifesto which also calls for a new deal for the arts or for more Australian equity in the development of our mineral resources. It follows that a good deal of sophistication is necessary in diversifying the approach to the electorate without too much fragmentation of subject matter and style.

One matter which I cannot let pass is the enormous disparity between the educative or, more precisely, the public relations resources available to the political party in office and to that in opposition. First, any Government has an inbuilt advantage in that it can arrange its legislative and Parliamentary programme (including the date of any election, sometimes decided upon well in advance but not disclosed until the right political moment), in a way best calculated to suit its electoral strategy. Second, each Government Department has an array of experienced senior officers briefing the Minister and researching materials for his speeches and his public statements, which naturally present the facts (or, more accurately, the case) in the most telling way from the Government's point of view. Most of the 25 Commonwealth Ministers have also as a member of their personal staff a press secretary, whose responsibility it is to get the maximum and most favourable publicity for the Minister and his work. In short, the party in power has a very extensive public relations apparatus at its disposal, provided by the tax-paying public.

It may be of interest to note that, by contrast, only three members of the Opposition in the Commonwealth Parliament, the Leader and Deputy Leader in the House of Representatives and the Leader in the Senate - have the services of a press secretary. Were it not for the excellent assistance provided to members by the recently established legislative research service of the Parliamentary Library, private members of Parliament would be left to do all their own research.

To provide adequate research and press facilities for its Parliamentary members would be an intolerable financial burden on any but the most affluent political party.

In addition to the disabilities inherent in the very circumstance of being in opposition, a party of radical reform, seeking to perform a politically educative role by promoting its policies from the Opposition benches, has to confront some formidable difficulties with the mass media. I would not wish to be counted among those who are ready to blame every shortcoming in the A.L.P's electoral performance on the sinister influence of the press. Indeed, I think there is much to be said for the view that the ordinary voter pays little attention to messages which do not fit in with his established orientations and patterns of living, and is less likely to be influenced as a result of direct exposure to the media than by an intensification of informal discussions in his own immediate environment. Nevertheless, I think it is beyond argument that the general tenor of the press, radio and television if *for* "the establishment" or "status quo" in politics and other fundamentals and, whilst sometimes *with* the forces of reform on fringe and peripheral issues, the media usually express a moderate consensus position which is at pains to disavow the more assertive forms of protest. Thus, the media attempt to set the community's tone and the level of acceptable dissent in such circumscribed terms that the Labor Party in opposition has to choose between falling in behind the "moderate" or "sound" line set by the reform forces within the establishment on the one hand, and on the other hand seeking public support for a more fundamental, principled approach in the face of uncharitable and often immoderate attacks from the media as well as from its official political opponents.

Only minor deviations from the established norm are regarded as in good taste. In recent times, the abolition of capital punishment and some sensible and humane reform of abortion laws have qualified for acceptance. In other fields, the licence is more tentative. Thus, students should be radical but not too radical in challenging the assumptions of their society or the basis of authority in their educational institutions. There should not be unnecessary censorship, but there should be some, and it is permissible to argue about definitions and the limits. It is "in" in 1969 to want to see Australian troops withdrawn from Vietnam (though it was definitely "out" in 1966, when Labor was plastered in the electorate when advocating this course). But it is still regarded as "borderline" taste to seek to achieve this end by any Australian initiative. It is always good form to ask the Labor Party how it will find the money to finance its election proposals, whereas an unusually attractive display of promises by the anti-Labor parties in government earns only a mild rebuke for "near-irresponsibility".

These constricting boundaries of non-conformity are real. The Labor Party steps outside them at its peril. With a few notable exceptions, the media are not anti-Labor in the formal sense. One or two are crudely so and unblushing propagandists for the Liberal Party. Most are quick to react against any suggestion that they have any party attachment. But, in a broad sense, Labor's "political education" programmes can expect benign neutrality or mild support from the mass media only if they are conducted within these limits of tolerance.

Nevertheless, no party would wish to ignore the mass media or to neglect opportunities for presenting its case through them. It is impossible to escape the consequences of being surrounded by a communications system. Indeed, the political process as a whole is influenced very considerably by access to the means of communication.

And so it is that Labor uses television in election campaigns, and its leaders and its spokesmen are always happy to be invited to appear in a million drawing-rooms at once. And they are ready to do this even if nobody mentions politics or elections on the programme. In this respect, all parties are ready to accept the two-edged sword of television and there are reasonably frequent opportunities available to all political parties to participate in T.V. interview and discussion programmes.

May I conclude with some brief thoughts about the role of Parliament in political education. In one sense, Parliament is the most important medium for political education in Australia. Our galleries are open to the public, and children and adults come by the hundreds of thousands to watch our proceedings. Here are enacted the laws which in one way or another affect your lives and mine. Here is the raw material for discussion and debate by citizens. For many years, proceedings of both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament have been broadcast. A growing number of people listen to these broadcasts. Personally, I am attracted to the suggestion which has been canvassed in Britain and elsewhere that the proceedings of Parliament or some of them should be televised. This subject was discussed at a recent International Symposium conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva and dealing with "Parliament and Its Means of Contact with Public Opinion Through the Press, Radio and Television".

The most cogent arguments in support of the proposal were put by Mr Robin Day (the noted B.B.C. Current Affairs Programme Producer). He urged 5 main grounds:

First, in the television age, Parliament cannot maintain its position as the prime forum of debate if it shuts itself off from the prime medium of mass communication.

Second, if Parliament were televised, you would have authentic political debate instead of substitutes devised by programme producers. Leaders of political parties would be questioned, and seen to be questioned by the public, by those elected constitutionally for the purpose of questioning instead of by television professionals.

Third, it would give the people, the electorate, a much clearer understanding of what Parliament is and how it works.

Fourth, it would arouse new interest in the work of Parliament among a generation which some regard as increasingly disillusioned about it.

Fifth, if Parliament were televised, it would solve many of the problems facing television in maintaining balance and fairness between the parties.

Mr Day's advocacy is shared by some notables in British public life, though some weighty figures disagree.

A Select Committee of all parties in the House of Commons reported in 1966 that a "feed" of all proceedings of the Parliament could be made available to the British broadcasting organizations for recording and editing by them for use in their radio and television programmes, and recommended an experiment on closed circuit for members of Parliament only. There seems to be a good deal of support for an impartially edited version, not quite aptly called a "late night Television Hansard". And a discussion has begun in Australia, with opinion somewhat divided.

I would like to see the idea carefully examined here. Its adoption in a form modified to suit Australian conditions might well make a real contribution to political education in this country. And the political parties would then have new obligations and new opportunities to establish what Aneurin Bevan called "intelligent communication between Parliament and the electorate as a whole".

But, whatever may ultimately come of this idea, let us set our sights high in political education as in all other educational activity. Sincereity of purpose is communicable and a reforming zeal infectious.

POLITICAL EDUCATION THROUGH POLITICAL PARTIES

by EDWARD ST. JOHN

The ambiguity of the title laid down for this paper gives me, at least, an opportunity to express some of the thoughts of a politician, without concerning myself unduly with their relationship to a clearly defined theme. But my observations will relate to political science and political education, and their relationship to the realities of politics and political parties. Perhaps that will suffice for the intended purpose.

Let us begin by examining the relationship between political science and the profession of politics. I hazard the hypothesis that the gap between the profession and the science is wider than that which exists in any other profession or field of study.

In other professions, training in the theory or the science is a necessary prelude to practice; the texts of the academics are the tools of the practitioners; and some men combine both roles - the teaching and the practice - either successively, or contemporaneously. Despite the inevitable conflict, at some points, between the theoreticians and the practitioners there is a mutual respect, and a constant interchange of personnel, techniques and ideas between them.

But how is it with the profession and teaching of politics? They often give the appearance of two different worlds. Few of the professional politicians have any training in the so-called "political science", and would gain but little from it, in a practical sense, if they were to have it; most of them scarcely bother to read what the political scientists have to say; even the most successful practitioner would be regarded as quite unqualified to teach "political science" - as indeed he would be, if by political science we mean what is commonly taught under that name; there is but little contact between the teachers and the practitioners; there would be little mutual respect; indeed in many cases the attitude of the politician towards the scientist, or the scientist towards the politician, would be something more closely approaching indifference, or even contempt; and it would be rare indeed for a teacher of politics to enter politics; quite apart from the loss of salary and status, he would probably be appalled by the prospect! At every point therefore we find a marked contrast with the relationships which exist in other professions and sciences.

This may be due in part to the nature of the subject matter. There are very good poets and excellent painters who know but little theory; any pretence to teach the "science" of art would quickly be seen as a sham. Politics is somewhat the same. There is much to learn about politics, but perhaps "science" is a misnomer. Yet the difficulty remains even if we discard the word "science". Why is it that so much of what is taught about politics is of so little interest or value to politicians? Conversely, why is it that politicians themselves, and the issues and dilemmas which confront them, seem to be of so little interest to many of those who profess to teach "politics"?

It seems to me that these are legitimate questions. Answer them how we will, I believe the dichotomy between the theory, or science, on the one hand, and the practice or profession of politics, on the other, constitutes a serious indictment of much of the teaching of "government", "politics", or "political science". I had formed this view from my own observations, but I was glad to find support for it, both in the observations of Senator Cohen, who quoted references to some political scientists as "disdainfully uncommitted," and "impeccably uninvolved," and in the thoughtful paper of Mr Owen Harries. Ignorant as I myself am of much of the theory, and the literature, I was grateful to learn from Mr Harries that some political scientists themselves have been critical of what has been taught as "politics" in recent times. In the latter part of his paper, he has identified with precision, so it seems to me, many of the reasons for the dichotomy which I had felt, this gap which I had myself discerned (without being aware of the reasons for it). In Dr David Dufty's paper, also, I found further confirmation of the views which I had formed.

Without wishing to be in any way offensive, therefore, the result of this dichotomy between the teaching and practice of politics might I think be well described as follows: it is as if one were to teach swimming - on dry land; and through the mouths of non-swimmers - men who don't particularly like swimming or swimmers (even when viewed from a distance), but nonetheless make their living by observing, teaching and writing about those aspects of swimming which seem to them to be fitting subjects of "scientific" study. Not surprisingly, in these circumstances, it often seems that they have little to tell us which is of any real interest or value to the swimmers; more than that, they give but little aid even to the understanding of what swimming is all about.

Such being the state of much political science today, as I see it, I had almost said that of all the various kinds of "political education" which were the subjects of papers at this Conference "Political Education through Political Parties" was the only real education in politics that there is - the kind in which one really swims, gets wet and learns what it is all about.

It is not for me to say how the situation should be remedied. But at least two things seem to me to emerge. First, the teaching of politics must be more closely related to politics, politicians, and political issues as they really are. Secondly, there must be a place for "value judgments" and questions of ethics. In saying these things I speak from my own experience, and my own heart; not as a philosopher, or a theologian, or a political scientist, but as one who did at least swim, one who experienced an intensive course in practical politics, and who now feels that it is the lack of these elements I have mentioned which has produced the end result, of an "empty" science and a barren theory and teaching of "politics", very often unrelated to the real world.

What then, are the matters, and the issues, which should concern those who teach "politics" in Australia today? Surely they should interest themselves in the things which are of concern to us, the Australian people, today. Political science must not be divorced from political history - particularly recent political history - and "current affairs", which will be tomorrow's history. It must not be divorced from political conflicts -

particularly current political conflicts, and current issues. It should be concerned with Australian democracy, and the Parliamentary system, with things as they are, and things as we should like them to be. It should be concerned with the purposes of our political institutions, and with the question whether those purposes are being well served - and if not, how they may be better served in the future. It should pay particular attention to the news media; it should consider carefully whether they are playing their proper role. A teaching of politics which does not fulfil these criteria will be of little interest, value, or importance to the Australian people.

Finally, it follows in my view that it must be concerned also with individuals - the politicians, at all levels down to shire and municipal councillors, the public servants, the newspaper proprietors and editors, the political journalists, the voters - their motivations, their success or otherwise in fulfilling what it conceived to be their proper role, and what may be done to improve their character or performance. And so it follows, inevitably, that we must be concerned, not only with value judgments, but also, equally importantly, with ethics and personal morality.

I was invited recently to attend a staff seminar of political scientists at a Melbourne university. One of the group said, not unkindly, "Mr. St. John, are you a politician or a moralist?" I said then and I say now, with all the force at my command, that the two roles are not mutually exclusive - that until we recognise and accept that we need politicians with strict moral standards there will be no improvement in our political life. The modern teaching of politics has succeeded in producing amongst some of our academics and some of our political journalists a complete cynicism in their approach to politics and politicians. The cynicism of politicians is bad enough in itself, but what hope is there for Australia when we find academics and political journalists seeking to outdo the politicians at their own game?

I shall give a few examples from my own experience. Take, first of all, the bitter campaign I was compelled to fight against the extreme right in Warringah, in 1966. It was, I suppose, a fitting subject for a book, and in due course a book appeared[1]. But the book was a grave disappointment. It was written by two political scientists. They gave us the marginal notes, and eschewed value judgments to the ultimate degree; so much so that the real point of the campaign, and the lessons to be drawn from it, were entirely missed. As I said, in my subsequent commentary, "All the authors have given us in dealing with the campaign itself is a rather sorry skeleton; with a patent lack of true insight, compassion, generosity or fairness they laid bare the bones, and failed to discern the life-giving heart of the matter, or the flesh which once covered them."[2] For this failure - for it was a failure - I believe their training as political scientists may have been partly to blame. I cannot see how else two intelligent, sensitive people could have produced so inhuman a result.

Another example is to be found in the comments which were passed by a prominent political scientist when the Prime Minister appointed Senator Malcolm Scott and Mr Dudley Erwin to the Ministry and Mr Freeth to External Affairs. Amidst expostulations from Press and public the learned professor assured us that "Looking after your buddies is what politics is about." And to the criticism that those men were inadequate for the posts to which they had been appointed he replied that there were no criteria by which such fitness could be measured! Less than a year later it is quite clear that Mr Gorton and the Liberal Party suffered badly, through those very appointments which our academic had sought to defend; Mr Freeth has lost his seat, partly through his own ineptitude, and Senator Scott and Mr Erwin have been dropped from the Ministry. Again, I feel that "political science" and the cynicism which it seems to breed, were at least partly responsible for these manifest errors of judgment.

Finally, let us recall the events of March, 1969, when I felt compelled to expose the character and conduct of the Prime Minister. The same commentator declared that those events would serve only to confirm the position of Mr Gorton. And indeed, during that period and the months that followed, while I went on record time and again predicting severe electoral losses for the Liberal Party if it did not set its house in order by removing Mr Gorton, most if not all political scientists disagreed with me. There was nothing they could measure which would cause them to agree with me. But as we now know, they were wrong.

These few examples drawn from my own experience tend to confirm the view that all is not well with the present theory or teaching of politics in Australia. Some all-important clues have been lost. The proper study of politics is - politics. There is no substitute for it. And if you seek to divorce it from ethcis, morality, or "value judgments" - from the consideration of what is good, and what is bad, from a study of what is conducive to the public interest and what is not - then indeed you are left with the "sorry skeleton", without flesh or body or soul.

What a sorry science it is, which inspires nothing but cynicism about politics and politicians! Which gives no encouragement, no hope, no faith, by which our young people may be drawn to the "noblest of all professions"! Which inspires its teachers with such a distaste for the profession that there is scarcely a solitary, isolated, example of their wishing to practise it!

Is it or is it not a good thing for the state that it should attract good men, men of proven capacity, men of light and leading, to the helm? Or are we to accept the latest nonsense that we are "safer" and better off with an apathetic electorate and mediocre leadership? Is it conducive to the public welfare that the truth should be told by bureaucrats and public Ministers? Are we to prefer honest men, or corrupt men? Arrogant men or men who desire to serve? Lazy, dissipated, drunken, men or men of integrity and self-discipline? Are we now afraid to call a spade a spade, or to admit that men do fall into these different categories? Do we fail to distinguish between good and evil conduct, right and wrong, truth and falsehood? Do we not admit that good and right and truth are beneficial to the state, and their opposites, when found in its leaders, highly detrimental to the public interest?

Unless we are prepared to give positive, unhesitating answers to these questions, our studies are vain. For myself, I have no doubt of the answers. My own experience has proved, to my satisfaction at least, the reality of these distinctions, their prime importance in politics, and their impact on the public interest, and Australia's future.

And so I make a plea for a teaching of politics oriented to real issues, to value judgments, and yes, if you like, to ethics in public life - to the difference between good and evil in public life, truth and falsehood in public life, and right and wrong in public life. I make a plea for a teaching of politics which will call our young people to disinterested public service, to commitment, to their crowning political education through political parties, or political activity of some kind. For a teaching of politics which will inspire them to seek out what is good, and true, and right, and to shun what is bad, or false, or wrong. Else we give them nothing but the empty husk.

REFERENCES

1. Politics of the Extreme Right, Warringah, 1966, by R.W. Connell and Florence Gould, Sydney University Press.

2. The Warringah Campaign, by Edward St. John, published in Quadrant, January-February, 1968.

REPORT OF SYNDICATE

on

THE POLITICAL EDUCATION OF AUSTRALIANS

by N. CREW

The First Session

Discussion centred on four main issues:

- The motivation of the agencies in providing political education;
- Methods of teaching politics;
- The level of work in this field;
- The question of impartiality in political education.

Motivation. There was support for the view that it was the responsibility of the agencies to preserve the democratic system and some members went so far as to argue that the agencies should endeavour to correct autocratic trends in the Australian society. Others felt that political education should be provided simply because students demanded it and it was argued that the agencies had a responsibility to provide political education for every student who sought it.

Methods. Here there seemed to be group agreement that political education activities should be organized around issues rather than the political science approach. It was pointed out that everyone is touched by political issues of one kind or another.

Levels of Work. There was considerable discussion on the subjects of levels and the group seemed to agree that a variety of levels should be available to meet the needs of students who range from the beginner to the very sophisticated.

Impartiality. The question of impartiality was considered at some length. There was some agreement with the view of the New Left political scientists, that teaching was most effective when the teacher taught from a definite position. Others argued strongly that impartiality was impossible in this field and that the teacher was bound to make value judgements and to reveal these.

The Second Session

Mr Crew agreed to commence the second session by expanding the view that the agencies had a missionary function to perform in providing political education.

Political education is the development of the individual's understanding and appreciation of the processes and institutions involved in the reaching of decisions and policies affecting the individual as members of society at the international, national, state and local levels.

We thought that the agencies we should be concerned with were those which are members of the A.A.A.E.

We agreed that the conference should take a moral stand and state its belief that every person living in our democratic society has the responsibility to be an active citizen in this society.

We recognize that not all people will be interested in, or desire to exercise this responsibility to the extent many would wish. Nevertheless adult education agencies must assume that all citizens should be informed and provided with the facilities and the opportunity to avail themselves of political education.

We also recognize that the various types of political education should be offered. In some cases the long term course on politics, sociology - or courses designed to teach how society functions - will be offered.

In other cases, issue oriented classes and schools will provide learning opportunities for other adults.

Both Harries and Crowley recognize that only a minority of the population can understand and be concerned intimately with politics. However, whilst agreeing, we support the concept that the minority should be a sizeable one.

We agree that too few people are involved in politics at present. This reduces the area of debate of political issues, and reduces the standards of political life by restricting the competition for political activities. It also restricts the choices the electorate may make when selecting people for office at any level of government.

Specifically we agreed that -

1. Many avenues of political education are available to the agencies.
2. That courses for influential members of organization in society should be organized.
3. That tutorial classes and schools should be encouraged.
4. That we should treat political theory systematically.
5. That other courses, schools should be organized around current political issues.
6. Assist voluntary agencies in the educational programme of voluntary agencies. That unless there is a change in the teaching resources of the academic department to assist in the teaching of politics this crucial area of concern will have to be curtailed.

This would be socially disastrous for at the moment of development it is vital that political decisions should be taken by an informed electorate aware of its responsibilities in the political future of the nation.

"THE ROLE OF THE ADULT EDUCATION AGENCIES IN THE POLITICAL EDUCATION OF AUSTRALIANS"

Statistics on Relevant Activities Supplied by Agencies

Background Material for Syndicate

Description of Categories:

Category A - Subjects directly on Australian politics and government; Australian history and social affairs; local government; foreign policy; defence policy.

Category B - Current international affairs; European or Asian history; civilization and government; social history; political ideology; race relations.

Category C - Political philosophy; sociology and anthropology; social psychology; economics and international trade; the political novel.

	1966			1967			1968		
	No. of classes & disc. groups	No. of schools	Total enrolments	No. of classes & disc. groups	No. of schools	Total enrolments	No. of classes & disc. groups	No. of schools	Total enrolments
C.A.E., Vic. (1)									
A.	Cl. 16	-	489	18	-	511	15	-	598
	Dgs 65	-	-	62	-	-	57	-	-
B.	Cl. 16	-	963	16	-	1050	20	-	1262
	Dgs.82	-	-	77	-	-	80	-	-
C.	Cl. -	-	-	1	-	20	4	-	158
	Dgs.62	-	-	52	-	-	54	-	-
Dept. of Ad. Ed. A.N.U.									
A.	1	-	31	3	1	204	3	1	188
B.	6	-	240	3	1	107	5	1	216
C.	1	-	63	2	-	42	2	-	46

	1966			1967			1968		
	No. of classes & disc. groups	No. of schools	Total enrolments	No. of classes & disc. groups	No. of schools	Total enrolments	No. of classes & disc. groups	No. of schools	Total enrolments
Vic. Education Dept. Ad. Ed. Centres:- Wangaratta, Shepparton & Benalla									
A.	1	-	20+	-	1	39	3	-	95+
B.	1	-	25+	-	-	-	1	-	30+
C.	1	-	30+	2	-	80+	-	-	-
Dept. of Ad. Ed., Univ. of Sydney (2)									
A.	Cl.18 Dgs.17	2	487 156 170	15 19	3	417 187 255	22 31	4	527+ 275 246
B.	Cl. 26 Dgs.59	-	1937 598	17 77	-	507 784	17 82	-	340+ 832
C.	Cl. 18 Dgs.51	-	379 476	10 48	3	295 394	11 44	4	223+ 432
S.A. Education Dept.	See footnote (3)								
N.S.W. Education Dept.	Nil Return								
Ad. Ed. Board, Tas. (4)									
A.	6	5	216	5	5	170	3	3	159
B.	7	1	152	5	3	211	7	1	207
C.	5	-	77	5	-	79	11	1	228
Dept. of Ad. Ed., Univ. of Adelaide	See footnote (5)								

	1966			1967			1968		
	No. of classes & disc. groups	No. of schools	Total enrol-ments	No. of classes & disc. groups	No. of schools	Total enrol-ments	No. of classes & disc. groups	No. of schools	Total enrol-ments
Ad. Ed. Board, Queensland		(6)							
A.	144	9	250	135	11	230	188	13	400
B.	148	16	300	94	16	280	141	18	320
C.	68	10	450	60	7	410	57	7	400
Dept. of Univ. Extn., Univ. of New England		(7)							
A.	7	3	257	4	4	277	4	18	1070
B.	8	2	223	44	6	783	47	1	875
C.	1	2	61	2	-	23	2	6	799
W.E.A. of N.S.W.		(8)							
A.	Tut.18		487	15		417	22		527+
	WEA -		-	2		102	-		-
		2	140		2	95		2	89
B.	Tut.26		1937	17		507	17		340+
	WEA -		-	7		492	-		-
		2	60		2	88		1	106
C.	Tut.18		379	10		295	11		223+
	WEA 1		10	7		440	-		-
		1	23		1	18		1	35

Note: Tut. = Tutorial Classes arranged in conjunction with Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.

WEA = WEA classes.

Notes

(1) Discussion group figures represent number of studies made of relevant books by groups (on a one book per month basis) divided by 4. The following comment accompanied the return:

> "I have kept as strictly as I can to the guidelines for each category and have tended to exclude borderline cases. For exexample, a course on "The Changing Role of Women" has some relevance to Australian politics and social affairs, but as it deals with the topic in a broader way, I have not included it.
>
> Category A
>
> In this category a number of the classes have an enrolment limit of 30 or 40, so the numbers are not an indication of the initial interest in the courses.
>
> Category B
>
> In this category the numbers are inflated by the big following we have for current affairs given by Zelman Cowen (1966 only) and Peter Russo, usually 120 to 140 in each course. Russo gives four courses each year. Added to this is a big enrolment in recent years in almost every course we have held on Asian affairs.
>
> Category C
>
> The number of courses and enrolments is smaller because we usually attempt the theoretical study of these topics in courses dealing also with current problems or policies, e.g. 'Anthropology and the Australian Aborigines' and 'Economics and Australian Economic Policy'. These are included in Category A. I have not included literature courses at all because, while 'Political' novels are frequently included, there hasn't been a course concerned specifically with this aspect of literature. The larger figure for 1968 is explained by a big enrolment for two courses given by Dr. Frank Knopfelmacher. Generally, though, I would say that we get a very poor response to purely theoretical courses, in economics and politics in particular. It is because they have failed to attract much interest in the past that, since 1966, we have offered so few.
>
> One point I would like to make is, that in offering courses of pure academic study in the field of politics (and in other fields, too) we are up against the fact that today, more than every before, the opportunity (and people's capacity) for informal self study has increased enormously, and will continue to do so. This means that courses of this nature have to be much more attractive and offer something that informal self education lacks. Otherwise adults will not come out to them."

(2) Other relevant activities not covered in the figures given include:-

Current Affairs Bulletin: Average circulation 50,000

	1966	1967	1968
A.	15	16	9
B.	9	7	14
C.	2	3	3

Television Tutorial

Offers at least one programme per week (25 minutes) in each of the A, B, C categories. Also occasionally provides a national platform for Category A issues (e.g. conscription, Australia and Vietnam).

Note: It was thought better to keep distinct figures for schools, discussion groups and classes, because of the great variation in 'student time' incurred across the range.

e.g. Intensive class - 25 x 2 - 50 class hours
Discussion group - e.g. 8 x 2 - 16 hours
Schools vary from 1 day - weekend - 7 days

(3) The reply to the questionnaire was as follows:-

"For the last three years we have had at least one discussion group meeting regularly (usually weekly). We have never had more than three groups functioning simultaneously. In some towns the group may have functioned for a year and then closed. Usually 18 - 20 people have attended this discussion, which is not confined to political education, but includes it with many other topics of interest to the participants.

Also, for the last three years we have had one group attending one term's formal examination subject, 'Australian Social Structure' as part of a commercial certificate course."

(4) The following explanatory note was sent with the return:-

"(i) Classes and discussion groups do not include straight out lectures nor have the book discussion groups been analysed. However, they do include 'seminars' which have normally gone on for a whole day.

(ii) 'Schools' are in most cases weekend or summer residential schools.

(iii) Trends in 1968-9 seem to show that there is increasing interest in local History and also Asian topics, race relations and economics."

(5) The return came in the following form:-

"1968: 1 course on Current Affairs - 10 lectures, linked with
course on Race Relations - 10 lectures
course on Australian Political Issues - 15 lectures
1 O'Clock Forum - 10 meetings

and a number of seminars on issues with political implications, e.g.

Government Aid to the Arts
Treatment of Prisoners in S.A.
The Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study
The South Australian Electoral System.

1969: current or planned:

2 courses Power Politics and World Affairs 20 lectures
1 course History of Political Ideas 12 lectures
2 courses Russian History through Russian Literature 15 lectures
1 O'Clock Forum: Australian History for Teachers 10 meetings

and seminars on the following issues:-

Australian Defence Policy, The Future of New Guinea, South Australian Aboriginal Problems, Television in Society, Some Economics and Political Implications of Scientific Advance, Water Resources in South Australia, The Adelaide Hills.

Discussion Courses: Australian Aborigines, Current Trends in China.

The new journal of our Department and the W.E.A.

This will be a quarterly with the title 'Issue' which will deal in depth with a social or political issue of moment in each number.

In recent years the Department has held seminars on Vietnam, Communist China, Russia after 50 Years, etc."

(6) The figures have been supplied in a form different from that of other agencies. The figures do not cover discussion groups, since Queensland does not have these. The figures for "No. of classes" are the total number of class meetings; the figures for "No. of schools" are for the number of places where activities were held.

(7) The following comment accompanied the return:-

"The figures I give are in some respects misleading since (i) they do not give any indication of the length and substance of the courses given, and (ii) they do not cover the work we do under the general heading of community development. The latter is, I think, relevant in that it is concerned with developing the capacity of the individual to play his part (politically and otherwise) within his community."

(8) The following comments accompanied the return:-

"(a) It should be noted that 'tutorial classes' are jointly arranged with Department of Adult Education of the University of Sydney. The figures given are for the same classes and students as reported by the Department.

(b) 'Enrolments' is a poor measure since it fails to distinguish the length of course.

(c) The 'pro forma' does not provide for public lectures. The W.E.A.'s figures for all public lectures and one-day conferences in the three years were

	Number	Attendance
1966	24	2176
1967	42	3655
1968	17	1645

A high proportion of these would fall into one or other of the three categories.

(d) The W.E.A. has always stressed that its organisational structure and the opportunity it provides for some experience in the problems of government and politics is an important educational experience in itself. It would be false to pretend that this is so for a large number of people but it would be equally wrong to dismiss it as of no significance at all. In fact several academics whose field is the study of politics have recently commented on the value their experience in the W.E.A. organisation has been to them in providing a greater understanding of their subject."

POSTSCRIPT

In spite of doubts raised during the conference, adult educators expressed their belief that political education was possible. Information gathered from adult education agencies throughout Australia shows that their concern for political education is indicated in the courses offered. This background information was separated into three categories. The first two have a direct bearing on the teaching of politics and related subjects; the third provides useful background knowledge for understanding political processes.

A. Australian politics and government, history and social affiars, local government, foreign policy and defence policy.

B. European or Asian history, civilization, social history or government; current, international affairs; political ideology; race relations.

C. Political philosophy, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, economics and international trade, the political novel.

Classes and Schools

	A		B		C		TOTAL	
	No.	Enrolments	No.	Enrolments	No.	Enrolments	No.	Enrolments
1966	61	1810	69	3600	30	643	160	6053
1967	63	2070	104	3238	33	997	200	6305
1968	78	2972	101	2936	42	1489	221	7397

Discussion Groups

	A		B		C		TOTAL	
	No.	Enrolments	No.	Enrolments	No.	Enrolments	No.	Enrolments
1966	82	156	141	598	113	476	336	1230
1967	81	187	154	784	100	394	335	1365
1968	88	275	162	832	98	432	348	1539

Adult education agencies compile their figures in different ways so a common basis for comparison is difficult to find. Because of this the figures above do not give a complete picture of political education in Australia. More is done than the figures indicate. Even with this allowance made the tables show that approximately 9,000 people in more than 500 groups scattered around Australia are making a constant and reasonably systematic study of subjects which can be expected to improve their knowledge and understanding of politics.

This indicates that adult educators have some justification for their belief that political education is possible for some members of the community. Whether these form an elite, the extent of their active participation in political processes, what qualities of leadership they possess and the amount of influence they are able to exert on the course of events is not really known. Perhaps here is a field of research which could do much to assist adult educators to construct courses or to develop methods of teaching which would make political education more effective.

The need for research was explicitly stated by Dufty in reference to school curricule. It is implicit in Partridge's paper and his classification of levels of political education. Schools and adult education organisations offer opportunities for sustained and systematic study of politics. If the mass media provide a meaningful supplement to this and political parties and other bodies give opportunities for effective participation, the future prospect may not be without hope.

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